

18
418
G O D L Y

ADVERSITY

Far better than WICKED

PROSPERITY:

O R,

The Rage of the Wicked, should not
Hinder the Race of the Godly.

Being a few Comfortable *Reasons* or *Encouragements*
against the Fear and Terrour of-Man: Very Sea-
sonable & Sutable for the Consideration of God's
People in this Day of Tryal, to Fortifie them a-
gainst all Troubles and Oppositions whatsoever.

Together with a Heavenly Discourse concerning the Saints
in their Kingdom; Wherein is Discovered the Excellen-
cy of the Kingdom it self; and the Wonderful Glory and
Happinesse of the Saints in their Heavenly Habitation.

By *Edward Noble*, an unworthy Servant and
Prisoner of *Jesus Christ*.

*Isa. 41. 14. Fear not thou, Worm Jacob, and the few Men of
Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord.*

*Rev. 2. 10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt Suffer;
Behold the Devil shall cast some of you into Prison, that ye may
be Tryed: And ye shall have Tribulation certain Dayes: But
be thou Faithful unto Death, and thou shalt receive a Crown
of Life.*

*Matth. 5. 10. Blessed are they which are Persecuted for Right-
eousnesse sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

London, Printed by *S. Dover* in *Christophers Alley* in
Martins, near *Aldersgate*, 1661.

GODLY

ADVERSITY

THE HISTORY OF

ADVERSITY

OR

THE HISTORY OF THE VICES OF THE WORLD

By the Hon. the Right Hon. the Lord of the Treasury

and the Hon. the Right Hon. the Lord of the Admiralty

in Council

Printed by W. Baskett, at the Sign of the Sun in Pall Mall

1711

LONDON

Printed by W. Baskett, at the Sign of the Sun in Pall Mall

1711

LONDON

Printed by W. Baskett, at the Sign of the Sun in Pall Mall

1711

To his Dear and much Respected Father (according to
the flesh) FRANCIS NOBLE, one of the
Lords faithful Servants, and Stewards of his
Household : And one of the Right Honour-
able Society of Saints, in the Faith
of the G O S P E L.

Dear and Well-beloved Father,

NOT only the Bonds of Nature, and the knot of Re-
lation betwixt us, but also the great Cord of Af-
fection and Christianity, hath drawn me forth,
and induced me to Dedicate these my weak fruits of *Labour*
and *Love* unto your serious and pious Consideration : judg-
ing it may be a great Manifestation of my Duty towards
you, and a signal Token of that *tender Love* and *Respect*,
which your Deserts (through Grace) calls for at my hands:
It is not Silver nor Gold, Money nor Riches that I have here
to present unto you, or to accommodate you withal ; but
such as my Heavenly Father hath (out of his abundant trea-
sures) bestowed upon me : It is not *Earthly shadows of a*
Temporal Concernment, but *Heavenly Substance of a Spiritual*
Nature ; Therefore what I have Received, I freely and cor-
dially impart unto you, hoping it will be an acceptable To-
ken unto you. Your *Aged Years* I Honour, and your *Gray*
Hairs I Reverence, especially being found in the Path of
Righteousness : for give me leave to tell you, that it's *Ver-*
tue and *Piety* that makes *Age* truly Honourable and Preci-
ous, more than Treasures of Riches, where Godliness is
wanting. It's no small Joy unto me, when I Consider you,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

not only as *my Father in the flesh*; but also *Related to me in the Spirit*; That there is a *nearer Relation* betwixt us than what is *outward*, and a more excellent *Affinity* between us than that of *Nature*; Our *Natural Relations* are but shadows and husks, and of a momentary standing; but *Spiritual Affinity* is a fountain of Joy that abides for ever; the *former* will perish and cease from *being*, but the *latter* shall continue, and never have an *end*. It's matter of great Rejoycing to me, when I Consider how you press forward and persevere in the wayes of God, even to your *latter dayes*, and in the midst of *Troubles*, that you are not frightened from the *Truth*, by the frowns of men, but still you continue faithful to the *Purity of the Gospel*, notwithstanding the *threatning ruine and spoil* that attends it. Oh! how many have run well in their *young dayes*, and gone on eminently for God in a Day of *Prosperity*, and yet in the time of *Persecution*, or else in the time of *old Age* have grown weary of God, and declined his wayes and Worship; and have minded their own ease and Interest, more than the Glory of God! But blessed be the Lord, it's otherwise with you, it is not *length of time* that hath diminished your *Love to God*; nor Changes of *Providences* that hath abated your zeal to the *Truth*, nor Alterations in Church and State, that hath altered your Resolutions in the Work and Service of your *Heavenly Father*.

Dear Father: You have lived to behold sundry and various *Dispensations* of God, and you have seen much of the *out-goings and in-comings of the Lord* in this Land of our *Nativity*; and you have experienced much of the Power and Goodness of mighty *Jehovah* in several Conditions, both in *Prosperity and Adversity*, in *Sickness and in Health*; yea, in the midst of *Discouragements*, you have received *Comforts* from God; and in the midst of *Troubles*, you have received *Strength* from the Lord: You have seen the *Churches of Christ*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Christ flourishing and shining in these Nations, and the *Enemies* thereof confounded and brought to shame: Your eyes have beheld what a Wall of Defence the *Rock of Ages* hath been to his People, and how he hath made their Enemies (though more and Mightier) to become Tributary and Servants to them; and how he had placed men fearing God, in great Places of Trust; and those that followed Vertue, and Piety, in Places of great Affairs; by which means *Magistracy* became a Terrour to evil-doers, & a Praise to them that did well; and *Religion, Vertue* and *Holiness* was Countenanced, Upheld and Maintained by a face of *Authority* in these Nations, in *your dayes*.

But now you have lived to see a mighty Change, and a wonderful Alteration, another World (as it were) flowing with sin and Iniquity, wherein the Church of *Christ* is very low, poor and contemptible; and the Vineyard of our God hath been laid open to ravenous Beasts, & the Boar out of the Wood hath laid it waste; and they have through their Subtilty caused many tall Cedars to fall, and by their Power have Crushed and Oppressed the tender Plants and Vines, and a great Inundation of Sin and Prophaness over-flows the Nation. Well, our God is at Work, and he will certainly do great things for *Sion*, and will in his due time turn all things to his own Glory, and his Peoples great Good and Benefit: Whether you may live to see the Redemption of *Sion*, or the Churches flourish again in this Nation, I cannot tell; But of this I am perswaded, That you will one Day enjoy a far better state of Joy and Perfection, without mixture or Changableness; and therefore as a Cordial to your Soul in this earthly Pilgrimage, I have briefly set before you a glimpse of that Glory and Happiness which the Saints shall enjoy in their Father's Kingdom; which Portion I doubt not but you can claim an Interest in, and I hope you will assuredly enjoy

The Epistle Dedicatory.

joy and possess it, when the *Earth* and *Heavens* shall be no more. Indeed, Considering *your day* is drawing to a period, and the great *Troubles, Calamities, and Afflictions* which you have seen, felt, and undergone; I did judge that I could not present unto you a more *serious, sutable, and seasonable Subject* than this. And Considering the *Troubles* of the Day, and the *Rage* of the Adversary, I have here drawn forth a *Cord of Encouragement*, out of the Scriptures of *Comfort*, as a means to Arm and Fortifie our *Souls* against the *Fear* and *Terrour* of Man; that we may *Chearfully & Faithfully stand* to the *Work of the Lord*, notwithstanding the great *Oppositions* which we may meet withal from the *Sons of Men*.

It's that which I *Pen'd* in the time of my *Restraint* and *Imprisonment*, when my *Soul* was much exercised in the Thoughts of *God's Goodness*; And truly, my *Soul* hath suck'd much sweetness out of this *Heavenly Fountain*; and it's that which hath much Refreshed, Comforted and born me up in the midst of my *Sufferings* and *Tryals*; And I hope it will (through the Blessing of God) be of the same use unto your *Soul*.

If the *Lord* by this Discourse should make me (who is the Fruit of your Body) an *Instrument* of Joy and Comfort to your *Soul*, in this Day of *trouble* and *difficulty*, I shall think my self largely Requited for my Labour in Writing; and shall earnestly desire that God may have the Glory: Therefore to that end, I shall Commend the following *Discourse* to the Blessing of God, and your serious perusal; and Rest,

*Yours by Relation and Affection, to serve
you as a Son, and a Servant in Christ,*

EDW. NOBLE.

To



To the Honest, and Well-Affected

READER.

Christian READER,

I*F thou art willing to walk in the Paths of Righteousness, that thou mayest enjoy Peace and Favour with God ; Thou must expect to meet with many Troubles, and Afflictions, Tryals and Temptations in this Earthly Pilgrimage, and many Disquietments from the hands of men : For here thou art but as a poor Traveller in a strange Countrey, subject to be much wronged and abused by the men of this World ; because thou belongest to another Countrey, and canst not Travel with them in the Road of Iniquity : inasmuch that thy Portion (it may be) here may seem to be grievous, and thy Burden may seem to be heavy : Therefore out of tender Love to thy Soul, I have here Compounded a Choice Cordial for thee, as a means to Comfort and Encourage thee in thy Christian Progress, that thou mayest not faint, nor be weary in well-doing ; for this I can assure thee, and that by Experience, That if thou dost but carry this Heavenly Cordial along with thee upon thy Heart, it will make the bitterest Cup of Affliction sweet and pleasant to thee ; and the greatest Burden of Grief and Misery shall be light and easie unto thy Soul : And if thou canst but taste the sweetness of it, by Experience upon thy Soul, it will make thee think thy self happy,*
though

To the READER.

though in the midst of Misery, and make thee Rejoyce, though in the midst of Sorrow, and give thee occasion to bless and praise the Name of the Lord, for the worst of Dispensations:

And lest thou shouldst at any time be filled and overcome with slavish Fear, under the Consideration of thy Earthly Adversaries, and be frighted from the Truth by the frowning Rage of thy Enemies: I here present thee with an Excellent Antidote against the Fear and Terrour of Man, which is known by Experience, to be of a wonderful strengthening Nature, and if it be kindly received into thy Soul, it will sufficiently Fortifie and Encourage thee against all Oppositions whatsoever, and make thee Bold and Courageous for the Cause of God, and Crown thee with Victory in Life Eternal.

So I shall commit both thee, and the following Discourse, to the Blessing of God, desiring thee to Read it Considerately, and peruse it in Love, that so it may prove as Food to thy Soul, and Strength to thy Inward Man, to the Praise and Glory of him, who hath called thee out of Darkness, into his marvellous Light; which is the Earneſt desire of his Soul, who is,

Thy Faithful Friend and Servant, in
the Concernments of Jéſus Chriſt,

EDWARD NOBLE.

A Strong

**A Strong Motive to faithful Perseverance in the
Work of the Kingdome; drawn from that
Excellent saying of our Lord Jesus
Christ, recorded in Luk. 12. 32.**

***Fear not Little Flock, for it is your Father's good
pleasure to give you the Kingdome.***

These Words were spoken by no meaner a Person, than
Him, whom all Christians do freely and readily ac-
knowledge to be the *Son of God, the Lord of Life, and
Prince of Peace*, even *Jesus Christ the Righteous*. And
therefore this in the first Place Considered, the words themselves
do in a special manner loudly Call for, and require our more seri-
ous and sober Consideration: And the Consideration thereof should
mightily induce us to be ready and willing to receive and embrace
that Doctrine and Counsel which is comprehended in these Words,
because they proceeded out of the mouth of so *gracious, wise, and
wonderful Counsellor*; One, whom his very Enemies could not but
Confess did speak *as never man spake*, Joh. 7. 46. And those that
were his Followers, and had much Experience concerning him,
do faithfully declare, that he had *the Words of eternal life*, Joh. 6. 68.
Therefore surely these Words must needs be of an excellent nature,
and of great Concernment unto our Souls; if we do but give dili-
gent heed thereunto; and without doubt, if the *Doctrine* of this
Text, were but the *Practice* of our *Lives*, we should be able to
grapple with, and get victory over all the Temptations, Tryals,
and Difficulties of this Life, and our Conversations would might-
ily conduce to the Glory of God, and to the Eternal well-being
of our Souls in the World to come.

An Excellent Antidote against the fear of Man.

Well, but let us come a little closer to the Words themselves, and let us see what this *blessed Counsellor* would have us learn from thence; and let us a little examine, what Encouragement he will give us to receive his Doctrine.

In the Words themselves, you have Chiefly these Three Things.

1. Here is an *Exhortation*, or rather a *Dehortation*, to dehort us from something which ought not to be found amongst us: Or more plainly, here is an *Injunction*; something enjoined upon us by way of Duty, which is, *Not to be Afraid*; Contained in these words, [*Fear not.*]

2. Here are the *Persons* included, upon whom this Duty is enjoined; and they are the *Disciples and Church of Jesus Christ*, Comprehended in these words, [*Little Flock.*] *Fear not Little Flock,*

3. Here is a great *Reason or Encouragement*, laid down to enforce the *Exhortation*, or to stir us up to put this necessary Duty into Practice; and that's in these words, [*For it's your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.*]

A Reason sufficient to enforce the Duty, and to Ballance all Oppositions whatsoever.

It is somewhat requisite that I should speak something concerning this word [*Fear*] before I come to the *Observations of the Text*: For the better understanding of our Saviour concerning this word [*Fear*]. If we do but peruse the foregoing part of the Chapter, it may very clearly be discerned, that he chiefly intends the Prohibiting of these two sorts of *Fear*: First, *Not to be afraid of man, nor of any thing that man can do unto us*; as you may clearly see in *vers. 4.* And I say unto you, My Friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and afterwards can do no more: For the Lord Jesus Christ knew right well, that his Disciples would be exceedingly hard by the World, and that they would meet with implacable Enemies and Adversaries, which would oppose them with great force and cruelty, in their journey towards Heaven. Now as a means to Establish them in the Truth, and to arm and fortifie them against the terror of these implacable Opposites, he spreads several Considerations before them, from *vers. 4. to vers. 13.* And at length sums up all in to this Exhortation and Encouragement, *Fear not little Flock, for it's your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.*

Secondly, By *Fear* in this *Text*, is intended this much, *That*

That we must not be afraid of wanting Wordly things relating to the outward Man, as Food and Raiment, or any thing that may be convenient and necessary for us; for many times the World proves such a snare, and such a clogge to Christians, as that it ~~for~~ *for* and ~~hinders~~ *hinders* them so, as they cannot run with patience the Race that is set before them; and is ready (many times) to pull them back again into Egypt, when they are Travelling towards Canaan; And to make them, with Devils, forsake the Communion of Saints in the wayes of God, and to close in with their Affections to the Transitory things of this present world. And many times Christians are very much filled with Fears, and Cares, and Perplexities of Spirit, upon the account of this World, fearing that Holiness and Purity (being so much opposed by the World) will tend too much to Poverty. And if they continue and persevere in that Path, they shall not be able to find Temporal Substances: And so under that Consideration, they are incident many times to corrupt themselves, and close in with any thing for Profit and Advantage. Therefore it is the great Care of our Saviour Christ, to arm and fortifie them against this kind of Fear also. As you may read at large from vers. 13, to the words of my Text; and there he comes to fasten his Concluding Injunction, and backs it with a very Glorious Encouragement, *Fear not, what ye shall do for Food and Raiment; do but you continue faithful in your Duty towards God; and to be sure he will continue faithful in his Mercies towards you; and whatever Crosses and Losses you may sustain in this World, yet be of good cheer, keep on your way, the time will come when you shall largely be made amends for all, when you shall receive a hundred fold for every particular loss.* For it is your Father's good pleasure, to give you the Kingdom.

The Words being thus Opened and Explained, I shall now come to deduct something from them by way of *Doctrine* or *Observation*, hoping it may (through the Blessing of God) be of some use unto our Souls.

Observ. 1. That Christ's Flock is but a little Flock. A Meane, Contemtable, Despised little Flock: Little in comparison of that great Multitude which runs the contrary way. A Meane and Contemtable (in the eyes of the World) in comparison of the many Mighty, and the many Noble which belongs to the Prince of this world. There are but few will come and abide in the Fold of Jesus, because he will not grant his Flock Liberty to feed upon the fat Pastures of worldly

Pleasures; nor glut themselves with Sin and Iniquity. There are a great many that will run freely and swiftly into the Path of Iniquity; but there are but a few that will run so freely into the high-way of Holiness, and continue in the Paths of Righteousness. Again, there are a great many that will take abundance of Care how they may make themselves Rich, and how they may grow Great in the World; but there are but a few that will take so much Care how they may please the Lord, or how they may make themselves Rich in Faith and good Works, that so they may be great in the Kingdom of Heaven. And again, There are a great many that follow the Devil in the broad-way to Destruction, but there are but a few that follow Jesus Christ in the narrow-way to Salvation; For *strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way which leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.* And again, *many are Called, but few are Chosen*: So that it seems, Christ's Flock is but Little, and the Children of Election are but few.

Well, But what's the Reason that Christ's Flock is so Little? And what is the Reason that there are so few runs the narrow-way to Salvation? What is the Reason or Cause (may some say) why so few are saved? I shall therefore (through the Assistance of God) offer to your Consideration some few Reasons or Grounds, why I judge so few belong to the Flock of Christ.

First, Negatively, What is not the Reason.

I do not believe that the Cause lyes at all in God, but altogether in Man: It is not because God hath determined, or absolutely Decreed that no more should be saved, as some weakly imagine; for God desires not the Death of a Sinner, nor delights in the Destruction of any man; but rather Grieves and Mourns over Persons for their Iniquities, and for destroying themselves; and is troubled, and sorrowful that they will not turn unto him, that they might be saved, *Psal. 81. 13. Jer. 4. 14.* compared with *Chap. 13. 27. and 44. 4. Luk. 19. 41, 42, &c.* So that it's clear from all these Scriptures, together with many more which might be given, That it is not because God hath absolutely Decreed before the Foundation of the World, that no more should be Holy and partake of Salvation; for he is not willing that any should perish, but that ALL should come to the knowledge of the Truth, and be saved.

Neither is it, because Christ Died for no more, and so they want a Saviour; for this is most certain, That Christ Died for All, 1 Tim.

And Examine the Motives against the Term of Salvation.

2d. Heb. 9. 26. for **EVERY MAN**, Heb. 2. 2. for **the World**, Job. 3. 1. for **all**, Job. 3. 1. **yea, for the whole World**, 1. Job. 3. 2. Therefore glad Tidings is to be Preached to every Creature, and all are Commanded to Repent and Believe the Gospel; so that it cannot be, because Christ Died for no more; for Christ Died as well for those that deny him; and for those that perish, as for those that believe in him; and are saved, 2 Pet. 2. 1. 1 Cor. 8. 11.

Neither is it because God with-holds the Means of Salvation from any man; for God affords sufficiency of Means to all People for their Salvation; and puts every one into a Capacity to perform that which he requires at their hands; and God never did, nor never will Condemn any for that which they could not do, but always for that which they would not do, Plal. 81. 11. Luk. 13. 34. Joh. 5. 40. Therefore it is not because God with-holds the Means of Salvation from any; for he never Requires that from any man to Salvation, which they are not in a Capacity to perform; nor he never Commanded impossibilities.

Well, having now shewed you *Negatively*, *What is not the Reason*; I shall also endeavour to shew you *Affirmatively*, *What is the Reason why the Blessings of Christ in his Estate, are not enjoyed by all*. And the first Reason, I judge may be this:

Reas. 1. Because the Reward which Christ hath promised to his Flock, is in another World, it is not to be found here below on this side the Grave; but it is to be enjoyed in another Life. And men generally love present things, and are much taken with that which is of a present enjoyment. Therefore it is, that most men are so Careful, and so desirous after the things of this World, because the Benefit and Pleasures of the things here below, are of a present enjoyment; but the Benefit of Holiness, and the Reward of God's People is not to be enjoyed in this Life, but in the World to come. Therefore it is, that men do so little regard the Service of God, because the reward seems to be at a great distance from them. For I am very much perswaded, That if the Reward of Godliness were but of a present Enjoyment, there would be abundance of Godly People; and Christ's Flock would be the greatest Flock in the World: As for Instance, Go to a Covetous Worldly-man, and Exhort him to Charity, and desire him to lay out great part of his Estate for the good of the Poor; and tell him, That he shall be sure to Receive a Hundred fold for it about a Week or a Fortnight hence;

hence; and if he were *burdensomely* Convinced of the Truth of this, I am perswaded, he would presently become a Charitable Person, and would easily be drawn to part with his Money willingly upon this account: But if you should beg of him, and bid him, Sell all that he hath, and give it to the *Poor*, and come and follow Christ; and tell him, That he shall be sure to have Treasure in Heaven; and be eminently Rewarded at the Resurrection of the Just. Oh! how little would this be Regarded by him. Oh! How little would this prevail upon him. Oh! The Reward seems to be such a great way off, that he doth hardly part with his Money upon such terms: Yea, I am perswaded that he would be so far from embracing your Counsel, as that he would rather be troubled and grieved at you, for speaking such Language to him: So that I judge this may be one great Reason, why the *Flock of Christ* is but *little*, and the *Number of the Elect* but few. *Yea, I reckon not; yet most*

But Second, Another is this:

Reas. 2. Because the Flock of Christ must expect to meet with Troubles and Tribulations in their journey towards Heaven: They must expect to carry a bitter Cup of Afflictions along with them in their Christian Progress. They must not expect to spend their dayes in Pleasure and Mirth, but to promote their own Honour and Reputation in the World: but rather Troubles and Afflictions, Tryals and Temptations, must be their daily Portion in this Life: Yea, *All that will live with Christ Jesus must suffer Persecution*: Therefore this *Tale Judge 30* be another Reason, why so few follow Jesus Christ: because his way is attended with Sufferings, and men generally seek after their own Pleasure, Ease, and Worldly Advantage; and do not love to Travel in a Suffering-Path, nor walk in a Way that is attended with Straits and Difficulties. Now you shall find most men are very willing to be saved, if they could be saved upon their own terms, by walking in Pleasures, and in the vanity of their own minds; but they are not willing to go through Sufferings to Salvation: they are not willing to go to Heaven upon God's terms, nor to follow the Lord Jesus Christ no further than it consists with their own carnal Interest & Advantage. Most men are willing to *live the Death of the Righteous*, but they are not willing to *live the Life of the Righteous*: They are very willing to receive the *Reward of the Righteous*, but they are not willing to *Run the Race of the Righteous*: They are very willing (it may be)

An Excellent Antidote against the Flock of Man.

9

to Reign with Christ and wear the Crown; but they are not willing to suffer with Christ, and bear the Cross: They are very willing to accept of the Crown of *Glory*; and drink Wine with Christ in his Kingdom; but they are not willing to accept of the Crown of *Thorns*; and drink Vinegar with Christ upon the Cross. Therefore this may be one great Reason, why so few walk in the way of the Gospel, because it is attended with *Persecution*; therefore says Christ, *There are some which bear the Cross, and receive it with joy, and keep it, and continue in it from hence, so long as the world smiles upon them; but when Tribulation, or Persecution ariseth for the Gospels sake, then presently they fly off, and leave the Gospel; and by and by are angry, and offended with it, for bringing Troubles upon them,* Matth. 13. 20, 21. So that it's the Tribulation of the Gospel, that many times keeps Persons at a distance from the Gospel, and makes many fall away from it, after Professing of it. And this we can too clearly evidence, and witness by experience at this day. That many Persons could very willingly follow Jesus Christ in his own way, and walk in the true Order of the Gospel, according to God's Appointment; but for fear of Trouble, and Persecution, they dare not: For they think, if they should embrace the Truth as it is in Jesus, and walk in Obedience thereunto, then they may come to lose the Love (it may be) of Father, or Mother, or some other Relations; and all their former Friends will now turn to be their Enemies, and hate them: And those, that use to speak well of them formerly, will now Mock and Reproach them, and do them what mischief they can; and so by this means, they may come to expose themselves to a great many straits and difficulties: And therefore under this Consideration, they stand off at a distance, and dare not obey the Gospel, nor come into the Fold of Christ. Hence it is, There are many Persons, that if you should say unto them, and ask them; *Are you willing to go to Heaven, and dwell with God to all Eternity in the Kingdom of Glory?* They will be ready to Answer, *Yes; Oh! with all my heart: It is the desire of my Soul to be with God in the Kingdom of Glory.* But if you tell them, *That they must go through much Tribulation, and suffer with Persecution, if they will enter into the Kingdom of God:* Then they will be ready to turn the backs of the Kingdom, and satisfy themselves without it, rather than expose themselves to so much trouble about it. So that I judge, this may be another great Reason, why Christ's Flock is but little.

But

But *Thirly*, Another is this, *And so draw again of*
Reas. 3. Because there are but a very few great Men that walk
 in the Truth of the Gospel; very few eminent Men in Authority
 will come into the Flock of Jesus Christ; but the Flock of Christ
 generally consists of a Company of Poor, Contemptible Men and
 Women, who are alwayes accounted as the filth and the off-scour-
 ing of the World; Poor *Fisher-men*; and *Tent-makers*; and such
Mechanical Persons; are generally the honourablest Persons in the
 Flock of Christ. But now, most People love to follow the Example
 of Great Men; and that Way which is highly esteemed amongst
 the Nobility and Gentry; is commonly little Regarded amongst
 the most of Men; but that Way and Religion that is honoured, and
 promoted by them, is very prevalent upon the Affections of most
 People, and much followed and highly esteemed amongst the Mul-
 titude: But now the Way of God is very little honoured and pro-
 moted by great Men; For, *not many wise men after the flesh, not ma-
 ny Mighty, not many Noble are called; But God hath Chosen the Foo-
 lish things of the World, to confound the Wise; and the Weak things of
 the World, to confound the things which are Mighty: And Base things
 of the World, and things which are Despised, hath God chosen, that no
 flesh should glory in his presence.* So that it seems, the Flock of God
 consists of a Company of *base, foolish, weak, despised, contemptible*
Creatures, as to the eyes of the World; and there are but very few
 Mighty Men of the World will lay aside their Honour and Gallan-
 try, and Travel in such a mean, contemptible path; So that this
 may be another *Reason, or Cause*, why the Flock of Christ is but
 little; Because most People delight to follow the Example of
 great Men: And there are but a few great Men belong to the Fold
 of Christ. Therefore there is a notable Text for this purpose, in
Joh. 7. 47, 48, 49. where the *Jews* Officers were so much taken with
 Christ, as that they could not but speak wonderful well of him be-
 fore the Chief *Priests* and *Pharisees*; saying, *Never man spake like
 this Man*: But when the *Pharisees* perceived, that they began to
 relish the Words and Doctrine of Christ, They presently began to
 put a Block in their way: And cry out, **ARE YE ALSO DE-
 CEIVED!** Are you so mad and foolish to be deluded by such a one
 as He is? Surely we hope you have more Wisdom in you than to
 be his Disciples; For pray Consider, Have any of the **RULERS**,
 or any of the **PHARISEES** Believed on Him? No, There is
 none.

none follows him but a few Ignorant Cursed People, which knows not the *Law*, therefore you must needs be deceived if you follow Him, because you know the *RULERS* are all Enemies to Him: So that you see, the main *Argument* that they made use of to dissuade these Persons from following *Jesus*, is this, The *RULERS* RUNS the Contrary way.

But *Fourthly*, and *Lastly*.

Reas. 4. Because there is no Honour, Credit, nor Worldly Reputation to be gained, by walking in the Fold of Christ: There is very few that will open their mouths to commend and speak well of those that walk faithfully with God in his own way: but rather the contrary: Those that will follow *Jesus Christ*, in the simplicity, and sincerity of the Gospel; must expect to be reproached, reviled, defamed, and evil spoken of by most People; yea, they must expect to be made a Reproach to their Neighbours, a Scorn and a Derision to them that are round about them, a By-word among the *Heathen*, and a *Shaking of the Head* among the People: But now, most men love Honour and Reputation, and delights in the praises of Men; and that which is highly esteemed, and had in admiration by the World, is very pleasing, and acceptable to most People: Therefore this is another great thing that keeps many off, from closing in with the way of the Gospel, because most men love that which is Honourable in the Worlds eye: Therefore sayes Christ, *Joh. 8. 44. How can ye believe, which receive Honour one of another, and seek not that Honour which cometh from God only?* So that while Persons are ambitious, and desirous of Worldly Honour, they can never be faithful Followers of *Jesus Christ*; for that which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God. And again, there is a notable Text for this purpose, in *Joh. 12. 42, 43.* where there were several Persons, among the *Chief Rulers*, believed on Him, but because of the *Pharisees*, they did not Confess Him, lest they should lose their Credit amongst them, and so be cast out of the *Synagogue*. Why, what was the Matter that they were not faithful to their Consciences in this Case? Why, here's the business; *They loved the Praise of men, more than the Praise of God.* They did see, and perceive, that if they had Confessed Him openly, and had declared in good earnest for Christ, then they should presently have lost their Credit and Reputation amongst the *Jewes*, and have exposed themselves to *shame and reproach*; for they knew, that the

way of Christ was every where spoken against, Acts 28. 22. Therefore they would be none of Christ's Disciples, because they were in love with Worldly Honour. Hence it is, that so many Rejects the pure Commands and Institutions of Jesus Christ, because they are mean and contemptible in the eyes of the World, and are not trimmed and garnished with Rich out-sides; Therefore it is, that so many mock and scoff, and jeer at that *Heavenly Ordinance* of Jesus Christ, *Believers Baptism*; and would not suffer it to have any Being or Entertainment in the World, because it must be done in a poor, mean, and despicable manner; I mean as in the account of the world. But if you come to talk with them about that foolish foppery, that Humane Invention of *Infant Sprinkling*, Oh! that must be had in Reverence by them, and that must be highly extol'd and magnified by them, because it is so neatly and handsomely done, and gilded with out-side gallantry; and of great Repute and very Commendable almost in the eyes of every one: For many times there is a brave *Silver Basin* to hold the Water in, & that makes an honourable show, and pleases the Fancy of People exceedingly. And again, many times there is a fine *Samite Mantle* to cover the Child, with a broad *Silver Lace* upon it; and that is very pleasant to behold in a Carnal eye: And several other *Ceremonies and Circumstances*, which are very decent and commendable in the account of the World; and therefore it is, that this vain and Scripture-less Practice is so acceptable to most People. So that I judge, this may also be another great Reason why Christ had so few Disciples, because there is no worldly Honour to be found in the way of Christ; and most men love not Shame and Reproach.

So I shall leave these few Hints to your serious Consideration, and Conclude this short Point with a brief Word of Caution, and so proceed to a *Second Observation*.

Well then, seeing it is so, that the Flock of Christ is but Little, let us take heed that we do not run astray from Christ, and so make it lesser: Let us take heed that we do not wander out of the Fold of Christ, and run after other Shepherds. Let us take heed that we do not leave the voice of Christ, and hearken to the voice of Strangers; but seeing we have given up our Names to Jesus Christ, let us endeavour (through the strength of the Lord) to follow Him cheerfully and willingly in all his Temptations; and let us remember the Lord is our Shepherd, therefore we shall want nothing that

is good and convenient for us; and then the Lord will take special care of us to deliver us out of *Egypt*, and to preserve us in the *Wilderness*, till we come to that eternal Rest, which yet remains for the People of God: And though we may be scattered in a cloudy and dark Day, yet the Lord will in a short time Return to his Flock and seek them out, and gather them together, and carry them in his bosome, and feed them upon the Mountains of *Israel*; and they shall no more be a Prey to the *Heaven*, neither shall the Beasts of the Land Devour them; but the Lord their God shall be with them, and they shall Dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.

But I shall Proceed now to a *Second Observation* from the Text, which is this;

Obser. 2. That the Saints and Servants of God, should not be afraid of the worst that man can do unto them.

A Third and Last Observation from the Text, is this,

Obser. 3. That it is the good pleasure of Almighty God, to provide and prepare a Kingdom for his People.

I shall not speak any thing further concerning that Covetous kind of Fear, which I last spoke of in the *Explanation*; But I shall endeavour to Apply my self to the Two last Propositions, they being Chiefly upon my Heart to Prosecute at this time, from this Text: Therefore I shall return to the *Second Observation*, which was this;

Obser. 2. That the Saints and People of God should not be afraid of the worst that man can do unto them. They should not be daunted, nor terrified at the worst Newes that they can hear out of the mouths of men; nor at the worst Punishment that they can receive from the hands of men: but they should still be bold, and courageous, strong and valiant for the Cause of God, and for the Interest of Jesus, though it may be attended with never so many Troubles and Oppositions: Yea, though stripes and buffetings should daily attend us (if it be upon the account of God) we should be so far from being afraid, as that we should rather Rejoyce, that we are counted worthy to suffer any thing for the Name of Jesus. Possibly the men of the World may be filled with madness against us, and put us in Prisons, by Hundreds and Thousands, and violently threaten us with Halter and Gibbet: Well, be it so; we should notwithstanding be Resolute in the strength of the Lord, and not be afraid, nor discouraged at *Rabshakeh's* Railing, nor yet at *Nebuchadnezzar's* Fury. See a notable Text to bind this Duty, *Ezek. 2. 6.* And thou

Son of Man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words: As much as if he should say, Though they may magnifie themselves against thee with high and lofty Language, and insult over thee with great and swelling words; yet fear them not, neither let their words terrifie thee. Again further, sayes the Text, *Though Briars and Thornes be with thee, and thou dost dwell among Scorpions:* As if he should say, Though they should be rough as Thornes, and sharp as Briars against thee, & put forth their persecuting hands against thee, to scratch and tear thee in pieces (as it were) with their Stocks and Whipping-Posts; and though they should *Hiss* and *Spir* their *venome* at thee, like so many *Scorpions*, and threaten thee with Death; yet be not afraid, for all this; neither be daunted nor dismayed at their proud looks, though they be a *Rebellious House*. Oh! that Professours at this day were but thus valiant for God, and thus bold for the Cause of Jesus Christ. But Oh! how doth the Contrary appear amongst Professors at this Day, to the great dishonour of God, and to the great grief of those who are truly sincere? Oh! how base and cowardly doth many eminent Professors prove in this day of Adversity? How are they ready to cast off all their Religion, and to close in with the Worshippers of *Antichrist*, and all out of a *slavish fear* of their persecuting Enemies? Well, but the Lord hath a Controversie against such Back-sliding Professours, and they shall not escape the hands of his wrath; for those that forgets the Name of the Lord in such a Day as this, and stretches out their Hands to a strange god, the Lord will surely search them out, *for he knoweth the secrets of the heart*, Psal. 44. 20, 21.

But we will see what the Scripture saith in another place, for the Proof of this Proposition, Isa. 51. 7. *Hearken unto me ye that know Righteousness* (sayes the Text) *the People, in whose heart is my Law:* Well, what's the matter that the Spirit of God calls so loudly for our Attention? What is it that the Lord doth so earnestly endeavour to press upon his People? See the following words, *Fear ye not the Reproach of men, neither be afraid of their Revilings:* Though the Wicked may Reproach and Revile you, and make you as the off-scouring of the World, yet that must not be regarded by you; that must be no excuse for you to be weary in well-doing, but you must still go on in the Work of the Lord, and follow after Righteousness; and fear not, but God will make you more than Conquerours, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thus

Thus much shall suffice for the Proof of this 2d. Proposition: I shall now come to give you some *Reasons*, or *Encouragements*, against the fear of *Man*, and shew you (in some measure) *why the Saints & People of God need not be afraid of the worst that man can do unto them.*

Reas. 1. Because the Lord himself will be continually with them in all their Troubles, to support and comfort them: He will come and visite them (if they continue faithful to him) with his supporting Presence, and be a Companion with them in all their Troubles: He will never leave, nor forsake his People in the worst Condition that may befall them; Therefore great Reason why we should not fear what *Man* can do unto us: You shall find by Consulting the Scriptures, That the People of God in old time, did make this Consideration a grand Reason, or Encouragement against the fear of *Man* in the worst of Troubles. And indeed, this is a very glorious Encouragement for poor Souls to stay themselves upon in time of Trouble, to Consider, That the Lord is with them in all their Troubles, and takes special notice of all their Afflictions, and he is ready at any time to put under his everlasting Arm to bear up their Souls, and support them under the worst of Tryals, and in his due time to deliver them out of all their Afflictions. Well, but wee'll see what the Scripture sayes concerning this matter: See first, *Psal. 23. 4. Yea* (sayes the Psalmist) *though I walk through the valley of the shadow of Death, yet will I fear no evil:* (Mark) how bold and resolute the Psalmist is in the midst of strange Difficulties: As much as if he should say, *Although I should walk in a dangerous valley, and mine Enemies at the top of the Hill, ready to overwhelm me with destruction; and though Death should pursue me, and be as near to me as my shadow, yet will I fear no evil.* Why David, what's the matter, that thou art so exceedingly transported above the fear of evil? Certainly, thou hast some Reason for it, thou could'st never be so full of Courage in such eminent Danger as thou speakest of, if thou hadst not something more than ordinary to Support thy Spirit. See the Reason therefore in the following words, **THE LORD IS WITH ME.** There's the business; there's that which is sufficient to fortify my Soul against all fear whatsoever: *Thy ROD and thy STAFF, they Comfort me:* As much as if he should say, *Although thy Rod doth a little Correct me, yet thy Staff doth exceedingly Support me,* and thy *PRESENCE* doth very much Refresh me; and betwixt them all, I am mightily filled with Comfort and Encouragement.

Thus

14 *An Excellent Antidote against the Fear of Man.*

Thus the Saints, and People of God, should Plead their Interest in him, in a day of Adversity, and he will make all things Comfortable and pleasant unto their Souls; and nothing shall be able to make them afraid. See also, *Psal. 46. 1, 2, 3. God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in time of Trouble*: Well, what then? What use doth the Psalmist make of this? Why, therefore will we not fear, though the Earth should be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the midst of the Sea, though the Waters thereof roar and be troubled, and though the Mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Here's an admirable Spirit filled with Confidence, and godly Resolution in the strength of the Lord: Challenging (as it were) the greatest Terrors on Earth, to shew themselves in their greatest Rage and Fury; yet they shall not so much as diminish his Courage, nor make him afraid: And the Reason of all is this, **GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH**. So that it seems, the Consideration of God's supporting Presence, is, or ought to be one great Reason or Encouragement to bear up our Souls in the worst of Troubles: Therefore when troubles do attend us, and when our Enemies are most implacable against us, and talk of Stoning of us, and Banishing of us, and putting of us to Death, and the like; let us with David, encourage our selves in the Lord our God, *1 Sam. 30. 6*. And let us consider, *the Lord is with us, and he is a present Help in time of Trouble*; and if God be for us, who can be against us? Therefore (saith God) *Isa. 41. 10. Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my Righteousness*: As much as if God should say, Although all the World should be against thee, yet fear thou not, keep close to me, and I will be with thee; and although thou hast never so many Enemies and Adversaries to oppose thee, yet be not dismayed, for I am thy God, and I will strengthen thee. And though they set themselves against thee, to wrong and oppress thee, yet be of good cheer, I will help thee, and take thy part against them: And though they think to Conquer thy Spirit, and subdue the strength of thy Inward-man, by Imprisoning and Punishing of thee; yet be not troubled at that, do but put thy Trust in me, and depend upon me, and I will uphold thee with the right hand of my Righteousness: Therefore seeing the Lord is so much engaged for the good of his People, let's not fear what man can do unto us.

Reas. 2.

Reas. 2. Why we should not fear man: Because the Lord himself will engage and fight against the Enemies of his People, and bring them to a reckoning for all their Malice and Cruelty towards them, though they may tyrannize and insult over God's Heritage for a time, and magnifie themselves against the Lord and his Jewels; yet the time will come, when the Lord himself will appear against them in Wrath and Judgement, and dash them in pieces like a Potter's Vessel, for their Rage and Cruelty against his People; Therefore this may be another Reason to arm us against the fear of Man, because the Lord hath engaged to deal with our Adversaries in Judgement, and Recompence Fury upon our Enemies for all their Tyranny towards us, and will assuredly work Deliverance and Salvation for his People from all their Troubles. See that notable Text, *Isa. 49. 25, 26. But thus saith the Lord, Even the Captives of the Mighty shall be taken away, and the Prey of the Terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with them that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy Children; and I will feed them that oppress thee, with their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine; and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and the Mighty One of Jacob thy Redeemer.* Thus the Lord will one Day deal with the enemies of his People, when they have filled up the Measure of their Iniquity, then they shall assuredly Drink the dreggs of the Cup of God's Fury; and when they are at the highest, raging, and roaring, and swelling in Malice like the Sea, against the People of the Lord, then is their destruction the nearest, and then is *Sion's Deliverance* near at hand. Read and Consider well that Scripture, *Isa. 17. 12, 13, 14.* compared with *Chap. 59. 15.* to the latter end: *No to the multitude of many People, which make a noise like the noise of the Sea, and like the rushing of many Waters; the Nations shall Rush, like the Rushings of mighty Waters; But GOD SHALL REBUKE them: And they shall flee, and be chased as the Chaff of the Mountains before the wind, and as Thistle-down before a Whirlwind: Behold, this is the Portion of them that spoil us, and the Lot of them that Rob us, &c.*

Oh! Little doth our Enemies Consider, what mischief they are a heaping upon their own heads, when they drive on so furiously against the People of God, and Persecute the innocent Lambs of Jesus Christ without a Cause: What account do you think they can give to the Lord, when he shall call them to a Reckoning for these things?

things? And how will they be able to stand before the Lord, when he shall bring them to a Tryal, for dragging his People out of their Houses from their Callings, and casting them into Prisons and Dungeons, and keeping of them there by Hundreds and Thousands for nothing but because they are Godly, and because they love the Lord Jesus Christ, and dare not sin against the Lord? Surely the Hand of the Lord will one Day take hold of Judgement for these things, and he will assuredly render Vengeance to his Enemies, and reward them that hate him, for the *Arrows* of the Lord are ordained against the *Persecutors*, *Deut. 32. 41, 42. Psal. 7. 13.* Therefore, though the enemies of God may now flourish and prosper for a while, and lye upon Beds of Ivory, and stretch themselves upon their Couches, and eat the Lambs out of the Flock, and the Calves out of the Stall, and drink Wine in Bowels, and annoint themselves with the chief Ointments; yet when the Lord comes to Plead with the Nations for the Controversie of *Sion*; Then they will be ready to run and hide themselves in the Dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains, and call to the Mountains and Rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

Therefore under this Consideration, let's not faint, nor be discouraged in our Progress towards Heaven; for if the Lord be on our side, we need *not fear what Man can do unto us.*

Reas. 3. Because our greatest, and our worst Adversaries (I mean our Persecutors) are but Men that shall die, poor, vile, sinful, mortal men, whose Breath is in their nostrils, whose Lives are uncertain, and whose greatest glory is but perishing vanity, and when they are at their greatest strength, and in their greatest Pride; The Lord can but put forth his hand and touch them, and so they become as nothing; and the Lord can but put forth his voice, and call for their Breath, and so they become but dust, and meat for Worms; Therefore great Reason why we should not be afraid of their greatest Terrour: For alas, they may threaten great things against the People of God; yea, and be ready to Swear (it may be) that such and such things shall be done unto them the next Week, or the next Month, when (it may be) the next day they themselves are summoned to their Graves, and so never live to see their wicked Designs accomplished. Therefore see how the Scripture Reproves Persons under this Consideration, for being afraid of man:

Isa. 51. 12, 13. Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of man, that shall DIE, and of the Son of man which shall be made as G. R. A. S. S. E. And forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the Heavens, and laid the Foundations of the Earth; and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the Oppressour, as if he were ready to destroy: and where is the fury of the Oppressour? So that it is below the Spirit of a Saint, to be afraid of any perishing Creature; it is a shame for a Living Saint, to be afraid of a Dying Sinner; it is a great dishonour to God, for Saints to be afraid of a mortal man, and forget the fear of the living God; it's a shame for a Saint, whose strength is in the Lord, to be afraid of a man whose greatest strength is weakness; it's a shame for a Saint, whose hope and Confidence is in the God of *Jacob*, to be afraid of a man, whose Expectation shall perish; it's a horrid thing that Saints should be more afraid to serve the Lord, then wicked men are to serve the Devil: Therefore let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering, and never fear what man can do unto us.

Rea. 4. Because though we may be troubled, and disturbed on every side by man, yet we have Peace and Favour with God: and though men may account us as the filth and the off-scouring of the World, yet the Lord doth esteem us as his Jewels, and his peculiar Treasure; And this may be sufficient to bear up our Souls in the greatest of troubles, to consider, That though the World may hate us with cruel hatred, yet the Lord loveth the Righteous, and taketh pleasure in his People; and though the World may be our Enemy, and frown upon us, yet the Lord is our Friend, and will smile upon us, with the Light of his Countenance, and refresh our Souls with the choice manifestations of his Spirit, and presence; and though in the World we may have Tribulation and Sorrow, yet in God we may have Peace and Comfort, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Therefore see where our Saviour Christ makes this a great Reason against Fear, *Joh. 14. 27.* where he speaks thus; *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you* for alas, the world many times giveth Peace; and presently takes it away again; it may give Peace and rest a little while, and (it may be) Sorrow and Trouble to Morrow; But now saies Christ, *I give not Peace after this manner; But my Peace I LEAVE with you,*

that is, it shall continue and Tarry with you; and none shall be able to take it from you: Well what then? suppose it be so why, let not your hearts be Troubled. neither let them be afraid for though your Enemies may Rob and Deprive you of your outward Comforts; and outward Enjoyments, yet they shall never be able to eat you out of my Favour, nor Deprive you of that inward Comfort and Spiritual Refreshment, that I will give unto you, and leave with you; Therefore be not afraid of their Terror, neither let your hearts be Troubled. And so, likewise see the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 1, 3. Therefore being Justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord*; So that now, we do not only Rejoyce in the hope of Glory; But, we also *Rejoyce and Glory in all our Tribulations, and are filled with Comfort in all our afflictions*, *2 Cor. 7. 4.* Therefore let us endeavour to keep in the Love and Favour of God, and then we need not fear what man can do unto us.

Rea. 5. Because all our Sufferings, (which are for Righteousness sake) work together for our good and great advantage, and will add to our future Glory and happiness; there is no misery that can befall us, upon the account of Godliness, but it will prove an addition to our Eternal Happiness; Every step we trace in sorrow, will be to the increase of our Eternal Joy. Therefore this may be another great Reason, why we should not fear the worst that man can do unto us; for alas, whatever they do unto us they cannot hurt us, if we keep close to God, they can do us no Injury at all; Nay, the more they Persecute us (if it be for Christ) the more it will conduce to our Good and Benefit. Oh what a glorious Encouragement is this for poor Persecuted Saints, to hold out in a Day of Tryal, and to bear up their Souls with Joy in the midst of Troubles! How is it possible (me thinks) for Souls to be dejected and cast down under Afflictions, and to turn their backs of God in a Day of Adversity, if they did but seriously consider of these things. For who is, he that can harm you, if you be followers of that which is Good; *1 Pet. 3. 13.* See also that notable place, *2 Cor. 4. 16, 17.* where the Apostles themselves made this consideration a great support to their Souls under all their Troubles: *For which Cause, (says the Apostle) we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed Day by Day; For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory.* So that you may see, All our Temporal afflictions, are but so many

Soul.

Soul Advantages, and all our Earthly Losses, will be made up to us in Heavenly Treasure, and all our Crosses will but make our Crown of Glory the greater; therefore under this Consideration, Let's go forward with Boldness in the way of the Lord, and never fear what Man can do unto us, Gen. 50. 20.

Rea. 6. Because, (if we continue Faithful to God) he will give us a Crown of Life, and a Kingdom of Glory; he will Eminently reward us with an unmoveable Kingdom, and with an Incorruptible Inheritance which fadeth not away: Though we may for a time be attended with a great many Troubles and Difficulties, and may be exposed to many outward Calamities in this Life, yet the time will come, when we shall be wholly Freed from all Sorrow and Trouble of what Nature soever, and shall be filled with unspeakable Joy in the Kingdom of Glory to all Eternity; And this is that which may exceedingly Support us under Sufferings, and Arm us against the Fear of Man, to consider, that we who are now Despised, and Trampled under Foot, and made as the off-scouring of the World, shall one Day be Honoured, and Dignified with a Crown of Glory, and Exalted with Jesus Christ in his Throne and Kingdom; Therefore saith the Apostle, *2 Tim. 2. 12.* Compared with *Rom. 8. 17.* *If we suffer with him, we shall also Reign with him, and be Partners together with him in Glory.* Oh this may mightily encourage us to persevere with Boldness in the Work of the Lord, and exceedingly Fortifie us against the Fear of Man, and Ballance all Oppositions whatsoever; and therefore you shall find, our Saviour Christ makes this a grand Reason or Encouragement against Fear, in the words of my Text, *Luke 12. 32.* *Fear not, little Flock; though you are but Little, Mean, and Contemptible in the Eyes of the World, yet Fear not, be not afraid of them which kill the Body, and Endeavour like Wolves to destroy you; Why what's the matter, that we must so little regard the Terror of our Adversaries? Why here's the Business; For us your FATHERS good PLEASURE to give you the KINGDOM;* Therefore seeing we have such a glorious Portion to receive from the hands of our Heavenly Father, let's never be afraid of our Earthly Enemy. See also that notable Text, *Rev. 2. 10.* *Fear none of those things which thou shalt Suffer; Behold the Devil shall cast some of you into Prison, that ye may be Tryed, and ye shall have Tribulation certain Dayes; yet notwithstanding, Fear none of those things.* Though the Devil and his Instruments may prevail

against thee for a season, to Imprison and Persecute thee; yet be not afraid, but be thou faithful unto death, and for thy Encouragement herein, I will assure thee thou shalt lose nothing by it, for thou shalt certainly receive a Crown of Life, and be exalted with me in my Throne and Kingdom: Therefore, let us have respect unto this Remembrance of Reward, and chuse rather to suffer Afflictions with the People of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of Sin for a season. And let's not be dejected, nor cast down, nor be afraid of our Adversaries, when they reproach and imprison us, and deprive us from our Callings and Relations, and threaten us with Ruin and Desolation, as to our outward man; but let us be content and chearful, if it be for Christ, let them do their worst, we shall have satisfaction enough at the day of Account, when God makes up his Jewels, and calls his People to their Crown and Kingdom. For what man is there, that would not be content and willing to lose a Penny, or two Pence, if he were sure to gain a Thousand Pounds by it? How much more should we be content and willing to lose any thing of this World for Christ, so long as we are sure we shall receive such an Eternal, and unspeakable Portion in the World to come? For every one that hath forsaken Houses, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands for Christ's sake, shall receive an hundred fold at the Resurrection of the Just, and in the World to come, Everlasting Life, Mat. 19. 29. Therefore saith the Apostle James, Chap. 1. 12. Blessed is the man that endureth Temptation, for when he is tryed, he shall receive a Crown of Life; which the Lord hath promised to those that love him: Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom, which cannot be moved, Let us abound in the Work and Service of the Lord, and never fear what man can do unto us.

I shall now come to make a little Use, or Application of this Point, and so proceed to a third and last Observation.

Use 1. Well then, is it so, That the Saints and People of God, ought not to be Afraid of the worst that Man can do unto them? Then in the first place, by way of Caution, Let us take heed of being fearful and faint-hearted in the Work and Cause of God: Let's take heed of neglecting any part of our Duty towards God, out of a slavish Fear towards the Threatnings of Man; Oh! let us take heed now, that we do not Dishonour the Lord, and wrong our own Souls, by a base, fearful, unbelieving spirit, in this Day of Jacob's Troubles; when the Lord shall call us forth, to bear a Testimony for his Name and Cause,

Cause, which are so much Blasphemed and Trampled under foot, as it is at this day : Let us take heed, that the Devil do not catch us in the snare of slavish Fear, and so hinder us, and stop us in our Proceedings for God, and in our Resolutions for Christ; and cause us to Comply with the Enemies of Godliness, and joyn issue with the Workers of Iniquity; to the great Dishonour of God, and to the encouraging and gladning the hearts of our Enemies; and to the wounding and sadning the Souls of those that are truly faithful : I say, let us take heed of these things, lest we shamefully turn our backs of God in a day of *Adversity*, out of a slavish Fear, of Suffering from the hands of Men. Oh ! we might here lament the Apostacy of abundance of Professors, since the Lord hath been pleased to turn his hand of *Tryall* upon them : Oh ! how have many Professors at this day, made *Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience*, and highly opposed the purity of the Gospel, and basely turned their backs of the Truth, as it is in Jesus; and all out of a slavish Fear of the Frowns and Displeasure of Man? Oh ! how have many Professors at this day, who have formerly born a glorious *Testimony* for God, and against Antichrist, yet now hath filthily defiled their hands with Iniquity, and corrupted their hearts with Covetousness, and lifted up their Souls to Vanity, and Sworn Deceitfully to *Babylon*; and all to avoyd *Sufferings*, and to advance their own Interest and Advantage in the World : Therefore I say again, Let us take heed to our selves, lest there should creep into any of us an *evil heart of unbelief*, in departing from the living God; for we shall be made partakers with Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our Confidence stedfast unto the end. Therefore, whatever we may Suffer or undergo for God, let us take heed of declining the *Cause* of God, and forsaking his Interest; for it is written, *The just shall live by Faith; but if any man draw back, my Soul shall have no pleasure in him*. And again, the *Backslider in heart, shall be filled with his own ways*, Heb. 10. 38. Prov. 14. 14.

Therefore when we meet with oppositions in the Wayes of God, Let's not be afraid nor terrified at them; if they shall threaten us with a *Prison* for our Integrity, let's not be afraid of a *Prison*, but cheerfully and willingly forsake all, and embrace a *Prison*, rather than forsake our Interest in God, to embrace this present world : If they shall threaten us with *Banishment*, for our Love to the Truth; Let not the fear of *Banishment*, cause us to turn our backs upon the Truth,

22 *An Excellent Antidote against the Fear of Man.*

Truth, and be afraid to own it ; knowing, that neither *Imprisonment*, nor *Banishment*, can deprive us of the presence of God, nor cast us out of the favour of him, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand, are pleasures for evermore : But if we out of a slavish Fear, neglect our Duty towards God, and turn from the Commandments of the Lord ; then we shall lose the favour of God, and draw the Judgments of the Lord upon us, and split our Souls against the Rock of his Displeasure ; Therefore saith God to *Jeremiah*, *Jer. 1. 17. Gird up thy loyns and arise, and speak unto them, all that I command thee ; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.*

There is a notable place in *Psal. 44.* which is worthy of our Consideration, and also of our Imitation and Practice ; it is a glorious Account of the Churches Faithfulness in an evil Day, and in a persecuted State, *Psal. 44. 9. and to forward : Thou hast cast off, and put us to shame ; Thou hast given us like Sheep appointed for meat, and hast scattered us among the Heathen : Thou makest us a Reproach to our Neighbours, a Scorn and a Derision to them that are round about us : Thou makest us a By-word among the Heathen, a shaking of the Head among the People.* Here's a miserable State indeed, for a People to undergo, full of Troubles and Sorrow, and full of Contempt and Reproach, and full of Distress and Miery : Well, but did they not turn back in such a day as this ? Is it possible for them to hold out, in the midst of so many Difficulties ? Did they not forsake the Cause of God, and decline his Interest, in such a Persecuted State as this ? Noe, nor at all : See *vers. 17, 18. All this is come upon us, yet we have not forgotten thee ; neither have we dealt falsely with thy Covenant ; Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way.* Therefore now let us consider, and make this Application of it unto our Souls ; whatever Sufferings we may meet withal, upon the Account of Godliness ; Let us not fear, let us not be dismayed, let us not value the worst that Man can do unto us.

Thus much in the first place, by way of Caution ; But Secondly, by way of Exhortation.

Use 2. Is it so, That the Saints and People of God, should not be Afraid of the worst that Man can do unto them ? Why then, let us not only be Cautioned from Fear, but let us be Exhorted to Courage ; Let us not only be Dehorted from the Vice of Fear ; but let us also be Exhorted to the contrary Virtue ; Let us not only be found passive in

in that which is not our Duty ; but let us also be found active in that which is our Duty ; that so we may be compleat in the Will of God ; and glorifie him in the whole course of our Lives and Conversations. Hence then, let us be Exhorted to be Bold and Courageous, strong and valiant for the *Cause of God*, and the Interest of Jesus Christ ; though we meet with never so many Difficulties and Oppositions in this World : Let us count nothing too dear to lose for Christ, seeing he hath counted nothing too dear to lose for us : If the Lord shall call for loss of *Liberty* at our hands, in the management of his *Cause* and *Interest*, let us chearfully give up our *Liberties* to the Lord, and embrace a *Prison* : If the Lord shall call for the leaving of Friends and Relations, and take us from our Callings, and call for the loss of Goods and Estate ; let us freely and willingly give up all for God, and be content without them, and still continue as bold as Lyons in our Testimony for Christ ; knowing that the time will come, when we shall have a hundred fold returned into our bowomes ; and the time will come, when we shall serve God in his holy Temple, and he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell amongst us, and we shall *hunger no more*, neither shall we *thirst any more* ; for the *Land which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed us*, and shall *lead us into fountains of living Water* : Therefore I say, let us go on with much boldness in the Work of the Lord, and let us make it appear to the World, that we are resolved (through the strength of the Lord) to *obey God rather than man* ; yet, let us manifest so much Courage in our Christian Warfare, as to be content to become any thing, yea, to become nothing, so the Glory of God may be promoted and advanced by us : Therefore in this Case, let us take the Counsel of David to his Son Solomon, when the Lord requires any thing at our hands to be done for the honour of his Name ; Let us be *STRONG* and of good *COURAGE*, and do it ; *Fear not, nor be dismayed, for the Lord God, even our God, will be with us ; he will not fail us, nor forsake us, till we have finished all our work for the Service of God, 1 Chron. 28. 20.*

Oh! we should very much glorifie God, and adorn the Profession of the Gospel, if we are but valiant for the Truth upon the Earth, and take the Tribulations of the Gospel chearfully and joyfully ; yea, we shall make our very Enemies admire at us, if we have but a right spirit upon this account : when they shall see and take notice, how we are troubled on every side, and how we are Persecuted and Afflicted,

24 *An Excellent Antidote against the Fear of Man.*

Afflicted, and trampled under foot, and yet we are chearful, and full of Courage, and not at all daunted nor terrified at it: They must needs think there is more than ordinary in our Profession, and so by that means God is exceedingly glorified, and his Truth admired by his Enemies; though possibly they may still obstinately and willingly oppose it, yet notwithstanding, they shall by this means be left without excuse; and the power of the Truth shall witness against them, to the praise and glory of God, and to the peace and comfort of our own Souls: Therefore saith the Apostle, *1 Pet. 4. 14.* *If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of Glory resteth upon you: On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.* There is also a notable passage of our Saviour Christ concerning Peter, *John 21. 18, 19.* *Verily, verily, (saith Christ unto Peter) when thou wast young, thou girdest thy self, and walkest whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not; This spake he, signifying by what death he should GLORIFYE God.* So that it seems, those that have so much Courage, as to suffer chearfully for the Name of Christ, and to lay down their lives for the sake of Christ, their Death and Sufferings will tend much to the Glory of God, and to the Eternal Blisse and Happiness of their own Souls.

Therefore when our Enemies shall threaten us, and command us to *speake nor preach no more in the Name of Jesus*, nor *Meet* any more to *Worship* God in his own way; Let us (with Peter and John) ask them, *Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye?* And let us tell them plainly to their faces, *That we must obey God rather than Men*; Therefore we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard, and we cannot but practise the things which we have learned, and received in Command from Jesus Christ.

There are two notable and very remarkable Examples worthy of our Consideration, which I shall briefly urge, for our Encouragement in this matter: The one is concerning the three Children, in *Dan. 3. 16, 17, 18.* Oh! that there were but such a spirit amongst the People of God now, in this day of *Sions* bleeding.

Well, but let us a little consider how they behaved themselves, the King had made a Decree, and given forth Command, That all People should fall down and Worship the Golden Image which he had

he had set up, and whosoever would not, should the same hour be cast into the midst of a Burning fiery Furnace. Well, but *Shadrach, Meshach* and *Abednego*, they broke his Decree, and disobeyed his Command, and was not at all afraid of his fury, nor terrified at the punishment; and when they were called to an account before the King for this their Disobedience to his Decree, he proffered them Pardon upon condition of their now complying; But if not, they must expect to feel the effects of his Rage and Fury in the Fiery Furnace; and who is that God, that should deliver them out of his hands? Well, now it is come to this with them, they must either *Turn*, or *Burn*; they must either Bow to the Image, or be Burnt in the Fire; they must either conform with their Bodies to the Kings Command, or else expose their Bodies to the Burning Flames. Well, and how did they behave themselves in this Case? See the story, and you shall find it at large, *Shadrach, Meshach* and *Abednego*, answered and said to the King (*O Nebuchadnezzar*) *we are not careful to answer thee in this matter; If it be so, our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the Burning Fiery Furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand (O King.)* But now, Herein consists chiefly the Excellency of their Spirit, in the next words, therefore mark; *But if not*, whether God will deliver us or no; *Yet be it known unto thee, (O King) that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the Golden Image which thou hast set up.* Here's an admirable Spirit for the service of God, full of Confidence and Resolution, for the Glory of the true and living God; As much as if they should say; If it be so (*O King*) do thy worst, we matter it not; our God whom we serve is able to deliver us; and he will deliver us from thy Rage and Cruelty, (*O King*) therefore we are not careful to answer thee in the Business; And further we testify unto thee, (*O King*) that whether he will deliver us, or not deliver us; whether we Burn, or not Burn; come Life, or come Death; yet we would have thee to know (*O King*) that we will not serve thy Gods, nor we will not worship the Golden Image which thou hast set up.

Oh therefore now let us endeavour to bear upon our hearts the Example of these three Famous Children, (or rather Champions) of the most High God; That we may through their example, be provoked and Encouraged, to hold fast the Name and Faith of Jesus Christ, even in the worst Condition that may befall us, that so being Faithfull unto

Death, we may receive the Crown of Life, and sit with Christ in his Throne and Kingdom.

Another Example that I shall take notice of, for our Consideration and Encouragement, is concerning *Paul*, in *Acts* 21. 13. which indeed is very Remarkable, and worthy of our observation and practise. *Paul*, it seems, had some Work to do for God at *Jerusalem*, and was much pressed in Spirit, to go, and bear witness to the Name of Jesus there; But it seems before he went, he was foretold in a Figure, how he should Suffer when he came there; and how he should be delivered into the hands of *Persecutors*; for there was a certain Prophet named *Agabus*, came down from *Judea*, and when he was come among the Disciples, he took *Pauls* Girdle, and Bound his own hands and Feet with it; and Prophesied in the Spirit, that so the Jews at *Jerusalem*, should bind the Man that owed that Girdle, and should deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles; And when the Disciples heard that, they began to perswade him, and earnestly entreat him, not to go to *Jerusalem*, and laid before him the Consideration of his *Sufferings*, thinking to prevent him of his Journey. Well, but what doth *Paul* do in this Case? Doth he neglect the Work of the Lord to avoid his *Sufferings*? Doth he forbear to go, because of Danger? No, its almost Death to him to think of forbearing, and leaving the Work of the Lord undone at *Jerusalem*, what ever it Costs him: Therefore said he in his Answer to his Disciples; *What mean you to Weep, and so Break my heart?* As much as if he should say; what mean you to be thus earnest, to hinder me from the Work of the Lord; away with all your Entreaties, and away with all your Perswasions; for I am more afflicted and wounded in heart, at the Consideration of your perswasions (in this Case) than I am at the Consideration of all my *Sufferings* at *Jerusalem*; For I would have you to think that I am Ready, not onely to be Bound, but also to Die at *Jerusalem*, for the Name of the Lord Jesus.

Oh that this valiant Spirit of *Pauls*, were but Seated and Grounded in the hearts of all Professors at this Day; how would it Glorifie God, and make his Truth and Gospel shine in the World, and mightily amaze, and astonish the hearts of our Enemies; and exceedingly Engage the Lord, to Crown us speedily with Victory and Deliverance!

Therefore now let us seriously weigh these things, and lay them to heart;

heart; And let us Rouse up our Dull Spirits, and be Valiant for God, and the more our Adversaries increase in their Rage and Fury against us, the more let us increase in our Zeal and Courage for Christ; and let us Remember the Lord is with us, and for us; and if we continue Faithful to him, *he will never leave us, nor forsake us*, But continually Support us, and Comfort us, and in his due time deliver us out of all our Troubles and Afflictions.

Therefore to conclude this point, *Let us be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his might, and take unto our selves the whole Armour of God, That we may be able to stand, and withstand, in this evil Day; That so having fought a good Fight, and having finished our Course, and kept the Faith, we may at length receive that Crown of Righteousness, and that Eternal weight of Glory, which is laid up for all those that love the Appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I have done with this point of Doctrine, and shall now come to the last Branch of the Text, wherein is comprehended the third and last Observation, which I raised from the words; I shall now endeavour to Manage and Prosecute that, as the Lord shall direct me.

Therefore I proceed and say; *That is is the good pleasure of Almighty God, to provide and prepare a Kingdom for his People.* The Lord hath so much Love and Affection for his People, as that he takes Delight and Pleasure in their Glory and Happiness; therefore he will be sure to have so much Care and Tender Respect towards them, as to provide a Reward for his Flock; And their Reward shall be no less than a *Crown and Kingdom*: I say, it is the good Pleasure of Almighty God to provide an Eminent Reward for his People; yea to prepare a *Kingdom* for his despised little Flock; *Fear not, little Flock, for it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom.*

Though possibly now, they may not be counted worthy of a poor contemptible Cottage by the Men of the World, yet the Lord himself will one Day count them worthy of a *Crown and Kingdom*; though now (it may be) they are not counted fit to have a being in the World, yet the LORD will one Day count them fit to have a Being in a *Glorious Kingdom*; though now (it may be) they are so much despised by the World, as that they are not counted worthy to dwell amongst Sinful Men upon Earth, yet they are so much honoured by the Lord, as that he will one day count them worthy to dwell with Glorious Angels in Heaven; though now (it may be) they are poor, and despised, and

trampled under Foot, yet they shall one Day be Rich and Honourable; and sit upon Thrones; Though now (it may be) they are cloathed with Reproach, and covered with shame. yet they shall one Day be cloathed with Majesty, and Crown'd with Glory; though now (it may be) they are tossed to and fro, and have no certain dwelling place, yet they shall one Day enjoy a *City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.* Here's a Glorious Portion laid up in store for the poor despised Flock of Christ; Here's that which will abundantly make them amends for all their Sorrow and Travel in their Earthly Pilgrimage; though now (possibly) they are counted the filth and the off-scouring of the World; yet the very poorest and meanest of God's People, shall one day be promoted, and advanced to an Honourable Kingdom; I say a Kingdom shall one Day be the Portion of the poorest and meanest of Gods People; yea, even those that are the most despised, and most abused, are no less than *Heirs of a Kingdom*, they have it now in promise, and they shall assuredly one Day have it in possession.

But for the better Confirmation of this Glorious Truth, I shall endeavour to give you some Scripture-Testimonies which strongly bear witness thereunto; See one in Mat. 25. 34. *Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, (which is his little Flock, being then Separated from the Goats) Come ye Blessed of my Father, (A Glorious Invitation indeed) he doth not onely invite them to come, But, come ye BLESSED;* Why what's the matter? Wherein doth their Blessedness consist? See the next words, and you shall find; *Inherit the KINGDOM, prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.* Herein doth their Blessedness consist, and herein are they Blessed Persons indeed. It was the good pleasure of Almighty God to provide and prepare a Kingdom for them, & now they are called to come and possess it; therefore this is one clear Scripture Testimony, to prove the Truth of this Proposition; namely, *That it is the good pleasure of Almighty God, to provide and prepare a Kingdom for his People.* See another, in Mat. 5. 10. Where our Saviour Christ speaks this Language; *Blessed are they which are Persecuted for Righteousness sake; for theirs is the KINGDOM of Heaven, (Mark) Blessed are they which are PERSECUTED for Righteousness sake:* Though in a PERSECUTED State, yet in a BLESSED State: though in troubled Condition, yet in a happy Condition: Why so? How doth it appear, that they are Blessed

Blessed in a Persecuted State? Why here's the business; there is a *Kingdom-Portion* prepared, to make them amends for their *Suffering-Portion*; therefore though they may be Persecuted, and Reproached, and evil spoken of, yet their Condition is blessed and happy, Because their *Reward shall be great in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Alas now we are but strangers and Pilgrims, Travelling towards our Fathers house, and we must expect to meet with many Rubs and difficult steps in our Journey; we must expect to meet with many Storms, and bitter Blasts in our way to Heaven, and to climb over many troublesome stiles, before we come to the Land of Rest; But when we come home to our own Country, and Arrive at our continuing City; Then we shall receive a Glorious Portion from the hands of our Heavenly Father, which will be no less than a *Crown and Kingdom.*

See another Glorious Testimony for the Truth of this Proposition, in *Luke 22.28,29,30.* Says Christ there to his Disciples, *Ye are they which have continued with me in my Temptations.* As much as if he should say; you are they which have been with me in all my Troubles, and have followed me faithfully in all my Sufferings, and have Travelled with me in a difficult path; and now, for your Comfort and Encouragement, here's a promise for you, to make you amends for all your Tryals, I'll see that you shall be sufficiently requited for every thing that you have lost in my service; Therefore take notice, *That I appoint unto you a Kingdom, even as my Father hath appointed unto me; And you shall eat and drink at my Table in my Kingdom, and sit upon Thrones Judging the twelve Tribes of Israel.*

Thus you see, what Honour and Dignity, what Glory and Majesty, the poor despised Saints of God shall one Day have conferred upon them; and what an Eminence Portion they shall one Day receive from the hands of their Heavenly Father: therefore, *Here* they have no continuing City, But they seek one to come: Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called *their God*; for he hath prepared for them a *City.* Therefore I shall conclude the proof of this Proposition, with that saying of the Apostle, *Jam.2.5.* where he speaks thus; *Hearken my beloved Brethren; Hath not God chosen the poor of this World, rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him.* Though they are poor in this World, yet they are rich in Faith, and Heirs of a *Kingdom*; and though now, (it may be) they are

A Glorious Portion for Despised Saints.

are Branded and Stigmatised with filthy names, and called *Phanaticks*, and *Schismaticks*, and *Hereticks*, and the like; yet they shall one day appear to be the Jewels of God, and all Nations shall call them Blessed, in a delightful Land; and they shall dwell with God in his heavenly habitation; For this we know, when our Earthly Tabernacle is dissolved, we shall have a Building of God, an house not made with hands, Eternal in the Heavens, *Mal. 3. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 1.*

So much shall suffice for the proof of this Proposition, viz. That Gods People shall one Day Receive, Possesse, and enjoy a Kingdom. I shall now come, to speak a few words concerning the Excellency of this Kingdom, and endeavour to shew you (in some measure) what manner of Kingdom this will be, that shall one Day be the Portion of Gods People.

First, That Kingdom, which God will one Day give unto his People, It is a Heavenly Kingdom: It is not an Earthly corruptible Kingdom, Adorned with worldly Vanities; But it is a Heavenly Incorruptible Kingdom, Adorned with Celestial Majesty: It is not a mean contemptible Kingdom, attended with Earthly corruption; But it is a High and Lofly Kingdom, filled with Heavenly Beauty: It is not an ordinary Kingdom, to be found here upon Earth; But it is an Extraordinary Kingdom, reserved now in Heaven; It is such a Kingdom, as all the Kingdoms on Earth, and all the Monarchs in the World, are not worthy to be compared, nor put in the Ballance with it: Therefore this is one thing which may (in a great measure) Demonstrate the Excellency of this Kingdom; It is such a Heavenly Portion, as that all the Earth, is not able to afford such a precious Jewel. See what the Scripture sayes concerning this Kingdom, in this very particular, *a Tim. 4. 18.* Sayes the Apostle there, *The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his HEAVENLY Kingdom,* (Mark) *he will preserve me not onely unto his Kingdom, but unto his HEAVENLY Kingdom;* An excellent Kingdom, of a Heavenly Nature, nothing on Earth comparable thereunto. Therefore sayes Christ also, *Mat. 5. 3, 10, 12.* *Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven: Blessed are they which are Persecuted for Righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven; Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven.* So that it is not onely a Kingdom, but a Kingdom of Heaven; it is not onely a Reward; but a Reward in Heaven; it is not onely a

Jern-

Jerusalem, but a *Heavenly Jerusalem*, *Heb. 12.22.* It is not onely a *Country*, but a *Heavenly Country*, *Heb. 11.16.* It is not onely a *Building*, but a *Building* in the *Heavens*, *2 Cor. 5.1.* *A City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God, Heb. 11.10.* So that this is the first thing, that bespeaks the *Excellency* of this *Kingdom*; It is a *Heavenly Kingdom*, A Portion which this World is not able to afford.

2. It is a *Glorious Kingdom*, or a *Kingdom of Glory*; It is not onely a *Heavenly Kingdom*, But a *Glorious Heavenly Kingdom*, or a *Heavenly Glorious Kingdom*; It is not a *Kingdom* mixt with worldly pollutions, but it is a *Kingdom* filled with *Heavenly Glory*; It is not a vile *Kingdom*, attended with shame and dishonour, But it is a pretious *Kingdom*, full of Honour and *Glory*; It is such a *Kingdom*, as all the *Kingdoms* on Earth, are not worthy to be compared with it for *Glory* and *Beauty*; there's no *Kingdom* on Earth, so *Glorious*, but it's mixt with some shame and contempt; But the *Saints Kingdom*, is altogether lovely, cloathed with *Glory* and *Majesty*; there is no *Kingdom* on Earth, so *Beautiful*, but it's mixt with some filthiness, and *Deformity*; but the *Saints Kingdom*, is altogether comely, full of *Spendour* and *Beauty*; there is no *Kingdom* on Earth so pleasant, but it's mixt with some filth and corruption; but the *Saints Kingdom*, is altogether pure, full of *Excellent Brightness*. Oh the *Excellency* and *Purity* of this *Kingdom*! Oh the *Glory*, and *Dignity* of this *Kingdom*! who is sufficient to expresse the *Majesty* and *Beauty* of this *Kingdom*? The tongue of Men and Angels is not able to speak forth the fulness thereof.

But now to prove, That it is such a *Glorious Kingdom*; see first that saying of the Apostle, *1 Thes. 2.11, 12.* *You know (says Paul) how we exhorted and charged every one of you, That you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his Kingdom and GLORY: (Mark) he hath not onely called you to his Kingdom, but to his Kingdom and GLORY; (that is to say) to that Glory which is in that Kingdom, which plainly shews it is a GLORIOUS Kingdom. And further it appears, that the greatest Glory, and the greatest Excellency that this World can afford, is not worthy to be compared with the GLORY of this Kingdom; For the Spirit of God in Scripture, doth frequently call the greatest Glory, and the greatest Honour of this World, But vanity and vexation of Spirit, and it's of no Esteem in the account*

count of God and good Men ; but the Apostle *Paul* in this Text, Reckons it a great Priviledge, and a wonderful happines, to have an Interest in this *Kingdom* and *GLORY* ; Therefore he strictly charged them, to walk worthy, or suitable to that great Love of God, which had graciously called them to such a *GLORIOUS Kingdom* ; And further saith he ; in another place, *Rom. 8. 18. I Reckon that the Sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the GLORY which shall be revealed.* There will be such Inestimable Glory revealed, in and for the Saints, when they enjoy this Kingdom ; as there is nothing comparable thereunto. there is nothing here below worth the naming in comparison thereof. Therefore sayes he in another place, *2 Cor. 4. 17. Our Light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, and Eternal weight of GLORY* : So that this is also another thing, which doth very much Demonstrate the Excellency of this *Kingdom* ; It is not onely a *Heavenly Kingdom*, but a *Heavenly Kingdom of GLORY* ; And there is a *Crown of Glory* in it, laid up for all the *Little Flock of Christ*, *1 Pet. 5. 1, 3, 4.* verses.

3. Lastly, It is an *unmoveable Kingdom*, or a *Kingdom* which cannot be moved ; It is such a *Kingdom* as can never be shaken nor moved, by all the Powers on Earth ; nor it can never be thrown down nor destroyed, by all the strength in the World ; All the Force and Violence, that men and Devils can use against it, can never shake nor move the Foundation of this *Kingdom* ; It far exceeds all the Kingdoms on Earth in this particular also : For alas, all the Kingdoms on Earth, are Changeable, and Mutable, and are very subject to be subdued, and destroyed, by Power and strength ; But the Saints *Kingdom*, is Unchangeable, and Immutable, an *Inheritance which fadeth not away.* Alas the Kingdoms of this World are at no certainty, they are often altering and changing in their affairs ; Sometimes to one thing, and sometimes to another ; sometimes High and sometimes Low ; sometimes Rich, and sometimes Poor ; sometimes Gaining, and sometimes Losing ; sometimes Peace, and sometimes War ; sometimes Prosperity, and sometimes Adversity ; Always Ebbing and Flowing ; Rising and Falling ; Changing and Turning, from one thing to another ; Till many times, *Kings* are even weary of their Kingdoms. And again, in the Kingdoms of this World, things are so Mutable, and subject to Change, that it's possible a man
may

may be a *King* to day, and a *Beggar* to morrow; a man may be upon the Throne to day, and upon the Dunghil to morrow; a man may be in great Honour to day, and in great Reproach to morrow; yea, a man may be a *Ruler* to day, and over-ruled himself to morrow: so variable and changable are even the best things of this life: By which means all things here below, are but *vanity* and *vexation of spirit*: But now it is not so in the *Saints Kingdom*, it's altogether Unmovable and Unchangable, there's nothing can alter or change the *Excellency* of that *Kingdom*, there's nothing can stain the Glory, nor diminish the Beauty of that *Kingdom*, but as it is a *Heavenly Kingdom* now, so it will be a *Heavenly Kingdom* for EVER; and as it is a *Glorious Kingdom* now, so it will be a *Glorious Kingdom* for Ever; and as it is full of Beauty and Majesty now, so it will be full of Beauty and Majesty for EVER: So that this is also another thing, which doth exceedingly proclaim the *Excellency* of this *Kingdom*; Therefore saith the Apostle, *Heb. 12. 28. Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be MOVED, let us hold fast Grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear:* (Mark) not only a *Kingdom*, but a *Kingdom* which *CANNOT* be *MOVED*; not only a *Building*, but an *ETERNAL Building*, 2 *Cor. 5. 1.* not only a *City*, but a *City* which hath *FOUNDATIONS*, whose *Builder and Maker is God*, *Heb. 11. 10.* not only an *Inheritance*, but an *INCORRUPTIBLE Inheritance*, which *fadeth not away*, 1 *Pet.*

1. 4.

So that these three things seriously considered, do exceedingly discover the unspeakable *Excellency* of that *Kingdom*, which the Saints and People of God shall one day receive for their *Reward* and *Portion*.

First, It is a *HEAVENLY Kingdom*.

Secondly, It is a *GLORIOUS Kingdom*.

Thirdly, It is an *UNMOVABLE Kingdom*.

Which being put together, make a *HEAVENLY, GLORIOUS, UNMOVABLE Kingdom*.

An excellent Habitation, an appointed Portion, a precious Reward for the People of God.

So much shall suffice concerning the *Excellency* of this *Kingdom* itself: I shall now come to speak something concerning the Privileges of God's People in this *Kingdom*, and endeavour to give you a glimpse, or a Discovery of that Glory and Happiness, which the

Saints shall be made partakers of in this *Heavenly, Glorious, Unmoveable Kingdom.*

The Happinefs and Priviledges of God's People in this *Kingdom*, consist in these two general Heads.

First, A *Freedom from all Evil.*

Secondly, An *Enjoyment of all Good.*

But more particularly.

First, They shall be all Righteous, and without Sin; they shall be altogether pure, and without spot; they shall be altogether clean, and without Corruption; they shall be altogether Holy, and without Pollution: This is a glorious State, and one excellent Priviledge that the Saints shall be made partakers of in this Heavenly Kingdom; They shall be wholly freed from Sin and Iniquity, and put out of a Capacity of ever Sinning more; Oh! this is a blessed Priviledge indeed, and much to be desired and longed after; Oh! saith many a gracious Soul, If I were but altogether free from Sin and Iniquity, I should think my self in a happy Condition indeed: Oh! If I were but in such a State, as that I could never Sin against God, what a blessed Condition should I be in? But this is such a Condition, as cannot be attained on this side the Grave; this is such a Priviledge, as cannot be found in an Earthly Pilgrimage; for alas! now we are subject to Sin every day, and lyable to fall into Iniquity every hour, and many Temptations offer themselves unto us, and spread themselves before us, and many times occasion us to Sin against the Lord, and endanger the destruction of our Souls: But now when the Saints enjoy this *Kingdom*, they shall be altogether free from Sin and Iniquity, and perfectly Pure and Undefined before the Lord; And all Temptations, and all occasions of Sin, shall be wholly removed and taken away, and they shall never be in a Capacity to Sin any more against the Lord; but they shall be all a *Tree of Righteousness*, planted by the pure hand of the Lord; And there shall be no more Curse, but the Throne of God and of the Lamb, shall be in it; and his Servants shall Reign, and serve him for Ever and Ever, *Revel. 22. 3, 5.* See also, *Revel. 14. 5.* *And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are WITHOUT FAULT before the Throne of God:* There's nothing of GUILT to be laid to their Charge; there's nothing of BLAME to be found amongst them; there's none can accuse them of any FAULT: *But they are altogether RIGHTEOUS without SIN, and they shall inherit the*

the Land for Ever, that God may be Glorified, Isa. 60. 21.

This is one great *Priviledge*, and one Branch of that Happiness, which the Saints shall be made partakers of in this *HEAVENLY Kingdom*.

But *Secondly*, Another is this.

2. They shall be wholly freed from all Sorrow, and from all Trouble of what nature soever; they shall be wholly freed from all manner of Grief and Anguish; from all manner of Distress and Misery, and they shall never know what belongs to Sorrow any more: Alas! now we are subject to much Sorrow and Misery, to much Trouble and Distress, and many distempers of Body, and defects of Nature, do dayly attend us; and several Afflictions are every day ready to seize upon us, as Sicknefs, Lameness, Blindness, Hunger and Cold, and many other Troubles and Miseries, are every day ready to fall upon the outward man in this life, which many times occasion great grief and sorrow of heart, and great trouble and perplexity of spirit, and great complainings under the burthen of bitter Afflictions; But now it is not so in this *Heavenly Kingdom*, for when the Saints receive their Portion there, then all Sorrow and Trouble shall quite be removed, and all occasions of Grief and Anguish shall be wholly taken away; and there shall be no more cause of Complaint under the burthen of any Affliction, nor no more cause of Grief under the sence of any Misery; *for they shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more*, neither shall the Sun light on them, nor any heat, for the *Lamb* which is in the midst of the *Throne* shall feed them, and shall lead them into *Fountains of living Waters*; and God shall wipe away all *Tears* from their eyes; and there shall be no more Death, nor no more Sorrow, nor no more *Crying*; neither shall there be any more *Pain*, for all such things shall be past away, and shall never have a Being in this *Heavenly Kingdom*; Revel. 7. 16, 17. & 21. 4.

Here's another *excellent Priviledge*, that the Saints shall be made partakers of in this glorious *Kingdom*; they shall never any more taste of Sorrow, nor never any more be acquainted with Grief; they shall never any more be troubled with Afflictions, nor never any more fall under Distress; though now (it may be) they may be laden with Afflictions, and burthened with Misery, yet the time will come, when Afflictions shall fly away, and Misery shall be no more; *For all Trouble shall be swallowed up in Victory, and the Lord*

36 *A Glorious Portion for Despised Saints.*

God will wipe away Tears from off all Faces, and the rebuke of his People shall be wholly taken away; for the Lord hath spoken it, Isa. 25. 8.

Oh! what an Eminent *Priviledge* will this be, for poor despised Saints to be made partakers of! Oh! what a blessed condition will they be in, that are subjects of this *Glorious Kingdom*! There is no condition on Earth so happy, nor no State in the World so Excellent, nor no enjoyment under the Sun, worthy to be compared with the least *Priviledge* in this *Heavenly Kingdom*; there is no condition on Earth so happy, but it's subject to misery; there is no condition on Earth so joyful, but its subjects to sorrow; there is no condition on Earth so pleasant, but it is subject to pain; but now the Saints in their Kingdom, shall be wholly delivered from all their afflictions, and shall never know what belongs to Trouble any more; They shall be wholly exempted from all their Infirmities, and be crowned with Perfection, without any change.

So that this is another *Excellent Priviledge*, or a second Branch of that Happiness, which the Saints shall be made partakers of in this *Heavenly Kingdom*.

But *Thirdly*, Another is this.

3. They shall dwell with God and Christ, and see them Face to Face; they shall be received into the presence of God, and behold his Glory; and they shall sit down in the presence of the Lamb and behold his Beauty; they shall be so much honoured by God, and promoted by Jesus Christ; as to be Companions with them in Glory, and dwell in their presence continually. Here's another *Excellent Priviledge*, and Eminent Dignity; which the Saints shall be made partakers of in this *Glorious Kingdom*. They shall not only be freed from shame and reproach, but they shall also be Crowned with Honour and Dignity. Their eyes shall not only be freed from vain sights, and Terrible objects; but they shall also be Blessed with Heavenly Visions, and Sights of God, and dwell in the presence of the Lamb continually. It's counted a great Honour, and an Excellent Priviledge, (amongst the Men of the World) to behold the face of an Earthly King, or to be admitted into the presence of a great Person; But it's counted more Honour, to be one of the Family and DWELL in his Presence, and to be a Companion with Him in his Honour and Dignity. But now, the Saints in their *Kingdom*, shall have tenfold more Honour and Dignity than all this; (I mean in
Reference

Reference to this particular, besides all the Rest) they shall have more Honour, than to behold the face of an Earthly King; for they shall behold the face of him that is *King of Kings*, and Lord of Lords; they shall have more Honour, than to be admitted into the presence of a great Man on Earth; for they shall be admitted into the presence of a Great God in Heaven: And not onely so, but they shall be of his Family, and DWELL with him, and be Companions with him in his *Glorious Kingdom*: Therefore says the Psalmist, *Psal. 140. 13. Surely the Righteous shall give thanks unto thy Name, The Upright shall DWELL in thy presence.* (Mark) it doth not say onely, *They shall BE in thy presence for a Little Time*; But they shall DWELL in thy presence; They shall continue and abide in thy presence as Persons belonged and related to thy House and Family; And they shall sit at the Table with Jesus Christ, and see his Face; and his Name shall be in their *Foreheads*, and they shall be known to be his servants for Ever, *Revel. 22. 4. Luke 22. 30.* Therefore sayes Christ, *Joh. 14. 3. If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto my Self, that where I am, THERE Ye may be also.* So that it seems, where the Lord Christ is Exalted, there must the Saints be Exalted; And where the Lord Christ takes up his habitation, there must the Saints be received; And they shall dwell in his presence, and see him, as he is: Therefore sayes the Apostle, *1 Cor. 13. 12. Now we see through a Glass darkly, but then we shall see face to face: now we know but in part, but then we shall know, even as also we are known.*

So that this is also another *Excellent Priviledge*, or a third Branch of that Happines which the Saints shall be made partakers of in this *Heavenly Kingdom*. They shall DWELL in the Presence of the Lord, and continually behold the Majesty of God.

But *Fourthly*, Another is this.

4. They shall be like unto Jesus Christ in Splendour and Beauty. Their Bodies shall be cloathed with glory and Majesty, like unto the Body of Jesus Christ. As Christ is Glorious and Beautiful, so shall the Saints be Glorious and Beautiful; and as Christ is fair and comely, so shall the Saints be fair and comely; and as Christ is pleasant and altogether Lovely, so shall the Saints be pleasant, and altogether Lovely; and there shall be no spot of Deformity in them, nor no Infirmary nor Blemish upon them; But they shall shine

shine in Beauty, like the brightness of the Firmament, and exceed the Stars in Lustre and Purity. Here's another *Excellent Priviledge*, and a lovely Branch of heavenly Happines, wonderful to consider of, and Marvellous pleasant will it be to enjoy the same. It's counted a great Honour, and a high Priviledge, amongst the People of the World, to be but a little Adorned with Earthly Beauty, or to have but a comely Face, Garnished with a little Natural Brightness; yea, many times it is so highly esteemed, and counted such a Rare Priviledge, as it makes many Persons proud, and high-minded, Because of their Earthly Beauty, and because of a comely Face: but alas, this is nothing in comparison of that Glory and Beauty, which the Saints shall be Adorned withall, when they enjoy this *Heavenly Kingdom*; this is not worthy to be named, in comparison of that Purity and Comeliness, which shall be the Saints Portion in their Fathers Kingdom; they shall have greater Honour, than to be Adorned with Earthly Beauty, and Natural Comeliness, for they shall be Adorned with Heavenly Beauty, and cloathed with Celestial Majesty; yea, they shall be Equal unto the Angels for Splendour, and like unto Jesus Christ for Glory. Therefore says the Apostle, *Phil. 3. 20, 21. Our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile Bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his GLORIOUS Body; according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

Though now they are vile bodies, attended with earthly corruption; yet then they shall be precious Bodies, attended with Heavenly GLORY; though now they are defiled Bodies, attended with many Infirmities; yet then they shall be Lovely Bodies, attended with perfect Purity, and mightily Adorned with Excellent Beauty. Therefore says Christ, *Mat. 13. 43. Then shall the Righteous SHINE forth as the SUN in the Kingdom of their Father.* (Mark) here's glorious Beauty, and wonderful Brightness; Here's Eminent Purity, and Heavenly Splendour, *the Righteous shall Shine like the SUN in the Kingdom of their Father*, even whilst others are weeping and wailing in a Furnace of Fire. Oh what unspeakable Glory, and Excellent Majesty is here prepared, for poor despised contemptible Creatures! Oh! how happy and blessed, will all those be, that shall be counted worthy of this Kingdom and Glory! All the Pleasure and Glory on Earth, is not worthy to be compared with one Branch of this Heavenly

venly Happiness : All the Honour and Beauty under the Sun, is not able to Parrallel the least Glimpse of this Heavenly Glory. See one notable Text more for this, and so I shall leave this Particular, and proceed to another, 1 *Job. 3. 2.* Where the Apostle is giving a short discovery of the Honour and Dignity of the Saints, both here, and hereafter ; *Beloved* (saith he) *now we are the Sons of God*, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : (Mark) Though we have so much Honour and Dignity conferred upon us now at present, as to be called the Sons of God, and though the Lord is pleased to extend his goodness so far towards us, now at present, as to make us his Children by the Spirit of Adoption, yet, it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; and yet this is such a wonderful Privilege, as it makes the Apostle exceedingly Admire at the Consideration thereof ; Crying out, *BEHOLD* what *MANNER of Love is THIS*, that we should be called the Sons of God ! He was mightily filled with Admiration, to consider of this wonderful Dignity ; but yet for all this, it doth not yet appear, what we shall be ; for we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be *LIKE him* : (Mark) *we shall be like unto Jesus Christ*, Blessed as he is Blessed, Beautiful, as he is Beautiful, Glorious, as he is Glorious ; Every way Adorned with Heavenly Happiness like unto Jesus Christ.

This is also another *Excellent Privilege*, or a fourth Branch of that Happiness, which the Saints shall be made partakers of, in this *Glorious Kingdom*.

Fifthly, Another is this.

5. They shall have wonderful Glorious Company, and blessed Society ; they shall be continually honoured with Heavenly Company, and blessed with Glorious Companions. The meanest, and worst of their Companions, shall be Blessed and glorious Angels. Though now it may be, they are so much despised by the World, as that they are not counted worthy to dwell in the Society of wicked Men ; yet they are so much honoured by the Lord, as that they shall one Day be counted worthy to dwell in the Society of Blessed Angels, and *THEY* shall be their meanest Companions. This is another *Glorious Privilege*, & excellent Dignity, for the People of God in this Heavenly Kingdom, they shall never have cause to complain of their Company, nor never have cause to be weary of their Society ; for their meanest Company shall be glorious Angels, and their worst Society shall

shall be Heavenly Spirits : And indeed this is a Priviledge, which is very acceptable, and delightful unto God's People, and highly esteemed, and much to be desired amongst good men now upon earth, (I mean godly Society) for indeed those that truly fear God, do count it a great Priviledge to enjoy the Society of good People ; and would reckon it a great Happiness, to be wholly and altogether freed from evil company, that they might alwayes enjoy the Society of godly People : Therefore saith *David*, *Psal. 16. 3. My goodness extendeth not only unto thee, (O Lord) but unto thy Saints, and excellent ones, in whom is all my DELIGHT.* But now in this *Heavenly Kingdom*, they shall not only have the Society of Saints, and enjoy Communion one with another, without any mixture of Evil ; But they shall also enjoy it with God, and fellowship with *Jesus Christ*, and have the Society of blessed and glorious Angels ; Therefore saith the Apostle, *Heb. 12. 22, 23. Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable Company of ANGELS ; to the general Assembly, and Church of the First-born, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.* Here's Glorious Company, and Heavenly Society ; here's pleasant Companions, and beautiful Partners ; here's honourable Equals, and lovely Objects, and all to attend the People of God, to encrease their Happiness in their *Father's Kingdom.*

So that this is also another *excellent Priviledge*, or a fifth Branch of that Happiness, which the Saints shall be made partakers of in this *Heavenly Kingdom.*

Sixthly, Another is this.

6. They shall have fulness of unspeakable Joy, and fulness of Glory and Happiness ; they shall be exceedingly filled with Gladness, and wonderfully crowned with Pleasure ; they shall not only be freed from Sorrow and Trouble, but they shall also be filled with Joy and Rejoycing ; they shall not only be freed from Pain and Misery, but they shall also be filled with Delight and Pleasures ; they shall not only be freed from Grief, and exempted from Misery, but they shall also be exceedingly filled with Comfort, and crowned with Happiness ; they shall have Beauty for Ashes, Joy for Sorrow, Pleasure for Pain, Glory for Shame, Honour and Dignity, for Reproach and Contempt, the garment of Praise, for the spirit of Heaviness ; that every way they may be crowned with fulness of Joy, and

and unspeakable Glory, according to that saying of the Psalmist, *In thy Presence is FULLNESSE of Joy, and at thy right hand are Pleasures for evermore.*

Oh! the excellent *Priviledge*, and wonderful *Happiness* of God's People; Oh! how blessed are all those that shall be counted worthy to enter into this *Glorious Kingdom*? Who is able to express the Happiness of Heavenly Subjects? Therefore saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 31, 19. Oh! how great is thy Goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in him?* (Mark) what unspeakable language the Psalmist makes use of in these words, he is not able to express the great Provisions that the Lord hath laid up in store for his Saints; Therefore saith he, *Oh! how great is thy Goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee?* He wants a tongue to express it, and therefore his heart admires it. See also a notable saying of the Apostle, *1 Cor. 2. 9.* where it is thus written, *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* (Mark) Here's wonderful things prepared, here's unspeakable Glory provided; *Eye hath not seen* (saith the Apostle) *the things which God hath prepared;* and yet the Eye of man hath seen many glorious things, and hath beheld many wonderful Objects, and eminent shews full of Delight and Pleasure; but yet the Eye of man hath not seen *SUCH* Things, as God hath prepared for his People: But further, *Ear hath not heard;* yet what wonderful; strange and excellent things; hath been reported to the Ears of man? Yea, the Ear many times may hear, that which the Eye never hath seen; but yet the Ear never heard of *such* Things, as the Lord hath laid up for his *SAINTS*. But yet further, *Neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive;* Yet what unspeakable things may the heart of man conceive to it self? What glorious and excellent things may possibly enter into the Imaginations of the heart? Yea, the heart may fancy to it self, things which are impossible to be, and things which cannot be uttered; the heart may conceive that which the Eye never saw, nor the Ear never heard; but yet the Heart of man cannot conceive *SUCH* Things, as the Lord hath provided, prepared, and laid up in store for them that love him. The tongue of men and Angels are not able to express the *FULNESSE* of that Joy, the *GREATNESSE* of that Glory, the incomparable Happiness of Saints in their *Kingdom*; All the

Joy and Pleasures on Earth, are but Sorrow and Misery, in comparison of this Heavenly Joy in the Saints Kingdom; All the Glory on Earth, is but Shame and Contempt, in comparison of the Saints Glory in Heaven; All the Happiness, that can be enjoyed under the Sun, is but Vanity and Trouble, in comparison of the sweet and heavenly Happiness in the Kingdom of Glory. Oh! how may this rejoyce and make glad the spirits of Saints, to consider of their Portion in their Father's Kingdom; Oh! how may this ravish and strengthen the hearts of Gods People, to think of their Fathers love, that he should extend his grace and goodness so far towards his Children, as to make them Heirs of a Glorious Kingdom, and crown them with unspeakable Joy and Happiness.

So that this is another Excellent Priviledge, or a fresh branch of that Happiness which the Saints shall enjoy in their Fathers Kingdom.

But Seventhly, and Lastly, That which is the main thing of all, and that which is most remarkable, is this: **ALL** this Glory and Happiness, and all this Joy and Blessedness, will be **ETERNALLY** and shall continue, **ever for ever and ever**; They shall always be glorious, and never know an end of their heavenly Beauty; They shall always be blessed, and never know an end of their Happiness; They shall always be joynt, and **NEVER** know an end of Gladness; They shall always be rich and honourable and **NEVER** know an end of their Excellent Dignity; They shall always abound in fulness of Joy, and never know an end of their unspeakable Plency.

This is that which doth eminently and chiefly demonstrate the Excellent Happiness of the Saints in the Kingdom of Glory; for if they were to enjoy never so much Glory and Happiness, and never so much Joy and Blessedness: yet if this were to continue but for a short time, or a little while, then indeed it would not be altogether so much worth the prizing; but the Glory and Happiness of the Saints in this heavenly Kingdom, is not onely for a little time, but for **ever and ever**; as their Happiness begins, so it shall continue, and **NEVER** have an end: as they shall be pure and without spot first, so they shall be pure and without sin for **EVER**; as they shall be freed from sorrow and trouble at first, so they shall be freed from sorrow and trouble for **EVER**; as they shall dwell with God and Christ at first, so they shall dwell with God and Christ for **EVER**,
and

and enjoy the Society of glorious Angels to all Eternity. There's nothing can alter nor change the Affairs in this Kingdom, nor nothing can bring the Glory of the Saints to an end. Oh, what an incomparable Privilege is this: where is there such a durable habitation in this world, or where is there such a resting-place on earth? Alas! like the glory of this world do chance to limits upon a person at present, and riches and honours do seem to encrease; all is to van and uncertain, that there's no confidence to be put in their lasting: The world may soon show a frowning countenance again, and quickly turn its own glory into shame and contempt; and quickly turn riches and plenty into poverty and want, and all may quickly make themselves wings and vanish away, and so procure great trouble and vexation of spirit. But now in this Kingdom, ALL their Happiness, and all their Privileges are ETERNAL, and shall NEVER have an end: Their Perfection shall be ALWAYS complete, and NEVER be diminished; Their Reward shall be SURE, and NEVER be removed; Their Joy shall ALWAYS continue, and NEVER be taken away. But as they are glorious and beautiful at first, so they shall be glorious and beautiful for EVER; and as they are rich and honourable at first, so they shall be rich and honourable for EVER; and as they are blessed and happy at first, so they shall be blessed and happy for EVER: ALWAYS rejoicing in fulness of Glory, and praising the Lord to ALL ETERNITY.

Therefore says the Psalmist, Psalm 16. vi. Under thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for EVERMORE. So also the Prophet Esay, in Chap. 62. 7. For their shame they shall have double; and for confusion, they shall rejoice in their portion: they shall inherit the Land for EVER, and EVERLASTING Joy shall be unto them. (Mark) Not only Pleasures, but Pleasures for EVERMORE; not only Joy, but EVERLASTING Joy: They shall not only have double Glory for all their Shame, and a joyful Portion for all their Confusion; but it shall be of an EVERLASTING nature, and shall continue for EVER. There's nothing shall be able to diminish their Joy, nor nothing shall be able to put an end to their Glory; for the portion of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the effect thereof ASSURANCE for EVER. Therefore says Christ, Mat. 25. 46. The wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life ETERNAL. Again, Whosoever shall leave all, and follow me, I will make him an heir of life, and shall inherit EVERLASTING

LASTING Life, *Mat. 19. 29.* They shall not only have a living portion, and a plentiful reward for all their losses and crosses in this life; but their portion shall be an **EVERLASTING** Portion, and their Reward shall continue *for ever and ever.* Therefore says the Apostle, *Gal. 6. 8.* *He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life EVERLASTING.*

Here's an *Excellent Priviledge*, and a wonderful Portion; here's a blessed Reward, and a happy Inheritance: who is able to express the Heavenly happiness of glorified Saints, in this eternal and unmoveable Kingdom? They shall not only be filled with joy, and crowned with glory, but they shall so continue *for ever and ever*, and enjoy the same to all **ETERNITY.**

So that all these things seriously considered, do exceedingly discover the wonderful Happiness, which the Saints shall be made partakers of in this heavenly Kingdom of glory.

Consider all these branches briefly in order together, and then judge whether you have not great cause to admire the goodness of God towards his now *Despised Saints* and People. Although indeed, all that I have spoken concerning it, is but a glimpse (as it were) of that Glory and Happiness which they shall enjoy when they shall come to receive the fulness of it in their Fathers Kingdom.

But yet in a Glass behold their Happiness.

First, They shall dwell in a heavenly, glorious, unmoveable Kingdom.

Secondly, They shall be altogether holy and pure, without sin and iniquity.

Thirdly, They shall be wholly freed from all manner of sorrow and trouble, of what nature soever.

Fourthly, They shall dwell in the presence of God, and of the Lamb, and see them face to face, and behold their Glory.

Fifthly, They shall have glorious bodies, full of splendor and beauty, like unto Jesus Christ.

Sixthly, They shall have altogether glorious company, and blessed society; their meanest companions shall be heavenly Angels.

Seventhly, They shall have fulness of unspeakable joy, and be exceedingly crowned with unspeakable happiness.

Lastly, And all this shall be eternal; *even for ever and ever.*

Oh taste and see that the Lord is gracious! blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

T thus

Thus having given you a discovery (in some measure) of that Glory and Happiness which the Saints shall enjoy in their Fathers Kingdom. I shall now come to make a little Use or Application of this comfortable Doctrine, and so conclude this Heavenly subject.

Well then, is it so, That God is pleased to provide and prepare a Kingdom for his People ? Then in the next place, by way of Discovery, this will serve to discover two things to us concerning the People of God.

First, It discovers the excellency of Gods People ; for if it be so, That the Lord hath prepared such an excellent Kingdom for his People, and accounts them worthy to enjoy such an excellent Reward : Oh ! then it must needs be true, that the People of God are an excellent People, and that they are wonderful high in Gods esteem. And if it be so, that the People of God shall be crowned with Glory, and cloathed with Majesty in a heavenly Kingdom : Oh ! then it must needs be true, that the People of God are a glorious People, and wonderful precious in Gods account. And if it be true, that the People of God shall be counted worthy to dwell in his presence, and behold his Glory ; then it appears, that the People of God are an honourable People, and wonderful famous in the sight of God : Though (it may be) they are much despised and trampled under foot by the men of this World ; yet be it known unto all, That there's none in the world so excellent as they : And though they are much reproached and branded with shame by the men of the world, yet of a truth, there is none in the world so glorious as they : And though they are counted the filth and the off-scouring of the world, by ungodly people ; yet there is none in the world so honourable as they : For pray consider, The poorest and meanest of Gods People are Princes of Heaven ; and they that are most despised, are now Heirs of a glorious Kingdom, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. It's counted a great honour and dignity amongst men, to be an earthly Prince, or an Heir to an earthly Kingdom ; and he that is Heir to an earthly Crown is counted an excellent Person, and worthy of honour and great respect : But the meanest of Gods People are far more excellent than he, for they are all the Sons and Daughters of the living God, and Heirs with Christ to a heavenly Crown and Kingdom. And they are so lovely and honourable in the sight of God, as that he accounts them his Jewels.

Jewels, and esteems them his peculiar Treasure, and renders them as he renders the Apple of his own Eye. This is such an honour and dignity, as all the Kings on earth are not able to reach unto, nor all the Princes & great men under the Sun are not able to claim an interest in such an *Excellent Privilege*: I mean, not by vertue of their earthly power and greatness, except they are such as belong to the number of Saints, and so invested with glory from Heaven. Therefore the meanest Saint in the world, is far more excellent and honourable than the greatest Monarch on Earth: Therefore sayes David, *Psal. 16. 3. Ady! goodness extendeth not unto thee, O Lord, but to the Saints that are in the earth; unto the EXCELLENT; in whom is all my delight.* But as touching the wicked, this is his language concerning THEM: *Dogs have compassed me about the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me, they are altogether become filthy and abominable; their POYSON is like the POYSON of a SERPENT; they are like the deaf ADDER, and like filthy BOAR.* Therefore I will not know a wicked person, but I will say unto them, *Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the Commandments of my God.* From hence you may observe; That wicked persons (though never so great in the eyes of the world) are loathsome and abominable persons, and very contemptible in the eyes of good men; but the meanest Saint is excellent and honourable, and very pretious, both in the sight of God, and in the account of his People. Therefore little do the foolish world think what they do, when they mock and reproach the People of God: And when they strive to persecute and afflict the Saints, they little think that the Lord takes it as done unto himself; and when they villifie and abuse such as are godly, they little think that they are a trampling under foot the Jewels of God, and fighting against the Lord: Oh! what enmity do such poor souls manifest against the God of Heaven? Oh! how contrary and opposite such persons are to the living God? For pray consider, they hate them, but God loves them; they reproach them, but God honours them; they abuse them, but God vindicates them; they afflict them, but God comforts them; they frown upon them, & pronounce them cursed, but God smiles upon them, and proclaims them blessed; they rob and spoyle them, and endeavour to deprive them of their earthly being, but God takes care of them, and satisfies their souls with his goodness, and will one day crown them with a heavenly Kingdom. Thus the Persecutors of *Sin* do set themselves against

against the Lord, and oppose the mighty God of Jacob.

They count them odious and filthy, but God counts them excellent and honourable. And all this is their priviledge now in this life, before they come to their Crown and Kingdom.

So that this is the first thing that I gather from this Doctrine of the Kingdom: It informs us, that the People of God are an Excellent, Glorious, and Honourable People.

But, Secondly.

It discovers the Happiness of Gods People. The People of God are not only an Excellent People, but also a Happy People: for if it be so, that the Lord hath prepared such a glorious Kingdom for his People, and accounts them worthy of such a blessed Reward, Oh! then it must needs be true, that the People of God are a happy People, and wonderful high in the favour of God: And if it be so, that the People of God shall have fulness of joy and unspeakable glory, in a Kingdom eternal: Oh! then it appears that the People of God are a blessed People, and mightily concerned in the love of the Lord. There's no condition in the world can make them miserable; they are alwayes happy, though in the midst of troubles; they are alwayes blessed, though in the midst of difficulties; they are alwayes rich, though in the midst of poverty; they are alwayes satisfied, though in the midst of hunger; they have alwayes enough to make them joyful, though in the midst of sorrows; they have alwayes enough to comfort them, though in the midst of discouragements; they have alwayes enough to support them, though in the midst of weakness; they are alwayes at liberty, though in the midst of bondage: There is nothing in this world can *harm them*, so long as they are *followers* of that which is good, 1 Pet. 3. 13.

Oh! what a wonderful priviledge is this, for travelling Saints to enjoy, for Strangers and Pilgrims to partake of, before they come at their rest: How doth this exceedingly proclaim the happiness of Gods People, and the blessed condition of all those that belong to Jesus Christ? Oh! how may this comfort and encourage the sorrowful hearts of many suffering Saints, and bear up their souls in the midst of Tryals? To consider, that though the world is their enemy, yet still the Lord is their friend; And though the World hates them, yet still the Lord loves them; And though they are deprived (it may be) from friends and relations, yet still they have an interest in God, and he is their Father, and he is able to make up the

the loss of any relation : And though they may want earthly enjoyments and worldly possessions, yet still they are rich in Promises, and Heirs of a Kingdom, and the Lord hath prepared an everlasting Portion for them. Therefore now, these things considered, doth exceedingly discover the happy condition of Gods People, whilst they are here on earth in their Pilgrim-state, besides that fore-mentioned glory prepared for them in Heaven ; for those that can claim an interest in this heavenly Portion, are abundantly happy, and continually blessed ; for its an excellent Fountain, full of spiritual refreshment and soul-satisfaction in the worst of troubles : Therefore you shall find that our Saviour Christ doth abundantly proclaim them blessed under this very consideration, *Mat. 5. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven : Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted : Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God : Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven : Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake, for GREAT is your Reward in HEAVEN.* So that it seems, the consideration of their future Reward in the Kingdom of Heaven, is that which proclaims them blessed and happy now upon earth. Though in a mourning condition, yet in a blessed condition ; Though in a persecuted state, yet in a BLESSED state : whatever their condition is, yet they are blessed, because their Reward is great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

So that this is the second thing, that I gather from this Heavenly Doctrine ; It informs us that the People of God are a blessed and happy People. Thus much for the first Use ; by way of Discovery.

But *Secondly*, by way of Examination.

2. *Use.* Is it so, that the Lord hath prepared a Kingdom for his People ? Then let US seriously examine, whether WE have an Interest in this Kingdom or no ? Let US search and try, whether WE have any thing to do with this Heavenly Portion ? Or whether WE have any share in this Glorious Reward, or no ? For pray consider seriously, what will it profit us to hear of a Glorious Kingdom prepared for the Saints, if we have no part nor portion there ? Or what will it benefit us to hear of the glory and happiness of Saints in the Kingdom of Heaven, if it do not belong to us ? Alas it will avail us nothing to hear of these things, nor to talk of these things, except we our selves have an interest in them ; and can call them ours :

It

It will do us little good, to hear of the Saints happiness, if we our selves are miserable: Therefore I say, let us take heed, and diligently examine how it is with us, lest any root of bitterness spring up in our souls and defile us, and make us unfit for this Glorious Kingdom; for no unclean thing, nor no unrighteous person shall ever inherit this Heavenly Kingdom. There's none shall be blessed with the visions of God, in the Kingdom of Heaven, but such as have clean hands, and a pure heart, and are cleansed from sin and iniquity: There's none shall receive the Kingdom which cannot be moved, but such as serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: There's none shall dwell in the presence of God in his Heavenly Habitation, but such as are humble and upright in conversation: There's none shall be happy in Heaven, but such as are holy and heavenly minded on earth; for *without holiness no man shall see God; and to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.* Therefore let us not flatter our selves with vain fancies, nor satisfie our selves with a bare profession of Godliness, nor proclaim peace and safety to our selves with sin in our bosoms; for if we do, we shall be deceived and undone for ever, *For God cannot be mocked, but whatsoever a man soweth, that he shall also Reap: And his servants ye are to whom you yeeld obedience.* Therefore sayes Christ, *Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.* (Mark) Not every one that professeth his Name and calls him Lord; but he that lives in obedience to the Will of God: There must be a walking with God, as well as a talking of God; There must be a DOING the Will of God, as well as a SPEAKING the Will of God. It is not enough to say, that Jesus Christ is our Lord, but we must make it appear by our actions, and by our obedient conversations, that he is Lord of our hearts; and that he *Rules and Reigns in our Souls*; for there are a great many that can call Jesus Christ Lord, Lord, with their tongues, and yet work iniquity with their hands, and intend mischief in their hearts: But alas! such shall never find acquaintance with God at the last day, nor never be entertained, nor received into this Heavenly Kingdom; *For every one that names the Name of Christ must depart from iniquity, and abhor that which is evil*, or else they must expect to be denied by Christ, and to depart out of his presence, as workers of iniquity; and all their profession will be so far from doing them any good, as

it will rather rise up in Judgement against them, and condemn them at the last day: Therefore it highly concerns us all to examine seriously how the case stands with us, and to give all diligence to make our Calling and Election sure, by an humble walking with God, and by a constant persevering in the pure wayes of the Lord, lest we should deceive our own souls, and misse of his Glorious Reward in this Heavenly Kingdom.

And if upon Examination we find our selves to be in Gods way, standing upon a sure foundation, then we may rejoyce in the goodness of God, and satisfie our souls at this Heavenly Fountain, and so long as we continue faithful to God in purity of soul, we may challenge an interest in this Heavenly Portion, and call the Kingdom and all its glory ours; and all the Promises of God in Christ Jesus, are Yea, and Amen to us, that by them we might be encouraged to continue and persevere in Holiness and Righteousness all the dayes of our lives, to the praise and glory of him who hath called us to this Heavenly Kingdom.

But now give me leave to intermix a word of Caution into this Use of Examination, and that is this: If upon right Examination, we find that we have an interest in this Glorious Kingdom, Then let us take heed that we do not turn aside out of the wayes of God, and travel again in the paths of iniquity, and so lose our interest, and be deprived of that Kingdom which once we had a right unto. Let us take heed that the Devil do not beguile us with his golden baits of sin and iniquity, and so rob us of our Heavenly Portion. Let us take heed that we do not sell our Heavenly Birth-right for a little worldly pottage, nor change our Heavenly Kingdom for a little earthly profit or worldly advantage: I say, let us take heed of these things, lest there should spring up some Root of Bitterness in our souls, and cause us to depart from the living God, and grieve his holy Spirit with our evil wayes, and give him occasion to swear in his wrath, That we shall never enter into this Heavenly Rest; for it is not every one that begins well, But he that endures to the END shall be saved; not every one that follows Jesus Christ for a little season, and so leave Him, that shall receive the Reward, But he that continues and abideth faithful unto DEATH, shall receive the Crown of Life; it is not every one that begins to fight well, that shall obtain the prize, But he that overcometh shall inherit all things. Therefore let us take heed that we do not grow weary of well doing, and so faint before we Reap: Neither let us give place to the Devil, lest he deprive

use of our Eternal Harvest, and plunder us of our Heavenly Treasure, but let us continue and persevere all our dayes in the work and service of our Heavenly Father, and never turn again unto folly: for Alas, we had better never begin well, except we continue so, and end well; For if after we have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of Jesus Christ, we are again intangled therein and overcome, then our latter end will be worse than our beginning; for it had been better for us, never to have KNOWN the way of Righteousness, than after we have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment delivered unto us, 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21. Therefore now let us take our last leave of every evil work, and wholly apply our selves to the work and service of God, and make it our meat and drink to do the Will of our Heavenly Father: And as the Lord hath called us to a Heavenly Kingdom, so let us exercise our selves in heavenly things, and be no more in love with the beggerly things of this life, but let us alwayes be found acting suitable to our Profession, and walking in such wayes as become those that are Heirs of a Glorious Kingdom, confessing that we are but Strangers and Pilgrims here on earth, having our affections estranged from the things of this world; That we may declare plainly, that here we have no continuing City, but we seek one to come, that so in all things we may dignifie our Heavenly Profession, and walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his Kingdom and Glory, alwayes remembering the counsel of the Apostle, Heb. 12. 28. *Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved; let us hold fast Grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*

Thus much for the second Use, by way of Examination, intermixt with a word of Caution.

But Thirdly, by way of Encouragement.

3. Use. Is it so, that the Lord is pleased to provide and prepare such a Glorious Kingdom for his People? Oh then, this may mightily encourage us to hold out in a time of Tryal, and to continue faithful for God in a suffering day. Oh! the consideration of this blessed Reward may exceedingly support us under Sufferings, and make us valiant for God in a day of Trouble, and ballance all oppositions whatsoever; for whatever we suffer or undergo for Christ, will be nothing in comparison of the Glory that shall be revealed for us in this Heavenly Kingdom: whatever we lose for Christ, shall be exceedingly rewarded with great advantage; whatever difficulties we

are exposed unto for God, shall be wonderfully requited in this Kingdom of Glory. Oh! how may this bear up our souls in Trouble, and make us joyce under all our sufferings? Oh! how may this greatly encourage us to run with patience the Race that is set before us, and lightly esteem the storms and styles that lye in our way? for consider, What can we suffer here, that is worth the naming, if we compare it with this Recompence of Reward? Art thou in Trouble? well be content, it is but for a while, and this Kingdom will ease thee; and thou shalt never be in Trouble any more. Art thou in Sorrow? well, endeavour to be cheerful, remember, *in thy Fathers Kingdom there is fulness of Joy*, and there thou shalt be eternally happy. Art thou deprived of worldly possessions, and so exposed to hunger and want? well, be of good cheer, still thou art Heir to a Heavenly Kingdom, and there thou shalt never hunger any more. Art thou in danger of losing thy life for the sake of Christ? well, be it so, part with it freely, this Kingdom will make amends for all, thou shalt be sure to find it again, and be crowned with Life Eternal. Oh! who then would part with this Heavenly Kingdom for a little outward ease and bodily advantage, which may last but for a day? who then would leave and forsake this Eternal Reward, to avoid a little temporal Trouble, and turn their backs upon a Glorious Kingdom, to escape a few light afflictions? Who then would change this infinite Portion, for a little trifling vanity, and sell this eternal Inheritance for that which profiteth not? but rather let's be encouraged to continue faithful in our Testimony for God, whatever it may cost us; and let's lift up our heads with Joy, and be exceeding cheerful under all our persecuting Troubles? for whatever our condition is, yet still our Kingdom-Portion remains firm and sure without corruption, and can never be taken away from us, unless we deprive our selves of it, by our sinning against the Lord.

You shall find, that this very consideration did exceedingly encourage the primitive Christians in the Apostles dayes, to hold out with joy under all their sufferings: see that notable instance, *Heb. 10. 32, 33, 34.* where the Apostle is putting of them in mind of their former great and grievous sufferings, and commending of them for their excellent behaviour under them: *But call to remembrance (sayes the Apostle) the former dayes, in which after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions, partly whilst ye were made a*

gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used; for ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods. Here was a great storm of afflictions, and abundance of sufferings, that beset these poor primitive Christians in their journey towards Heaven. Here were mockings and reproaches, and many other afflictions, together with plundering and spoiling of goods; and yet they were so far from being discouraged at these things, as that they did not only take them patiently, but joyfully: Why, what was the matter that these Christians were so joyful under their sufferings, and so much supported and encouraged under all their afflictions? why this was the business: They knew in themselves that in HEAVEN they had a BETTER and an ENDURING Substance; They knew that though they were Losers now, yet they should be great Gainers in the Kingdom of Heaven; They knew that there was a Reward laid up for them in Heaven, which would abundantly make them amends for all their losses and sufferings here; They knew that their Portion in Heaven was unmoveable, and nothing could spoil that eternal Inheritance: Therefore they did not value the loss of any thing here below, so long as they had an interest in such a Heaven-ly-enduring Substance.

See also the example of *Moses*, where it is notably laid down for our encouragement, under this very consideration, *Heb. 11. 24, 25, 26. Who when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; chusing rather to suffer afflictions with the People of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.* (Mark) He left and forsook all the pleasures of *Pharaoh's Court*, and denied the Princely promotion of *Egypt*, and made a voluntary choice of a suffering path, with despised People, rather than a pleasant Pasture, with honourable Society; *Esteeming the Reproach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt*; when he might have enjoyed great honour and dignity in the Court of a King, *he chased rather shame and reproach*, in a suffering Wilderness, and accounted that the wisest choice, and the greatest happiness. Why, what was the reason of all this? what was the matter with *Moses*, that he did so willingly chuse to suffer afflictions, when he might have enjoyed his pleasure; and content himself with shame and reproach, when he might have enjoyed great honour and dignity? Why here was the business: *FOR* (says the Text) *he had respect unto the RECOM- PENCE.*

PENCE of REWARD. He had such a love to the Kingdom of Heaven, that he did not value the Treasures of *Egypt*; he had such an eye to the Reward in heaven, that he did not matter the pleasures on earth; for he knew, and did believe that all things should work together for his good and great advantage, and that he should be abundantly requited in this Heavenly Kingdom: Therefore so long as he kept up his interest there, he had more comfort in suffering afflictions, than he could have had in the enjoyment of all the world without it; for the least Branch of this Heavenly Happiness, is better worth than all the pleasures under the Sun: Therefore the consideration of this Heavenly Reward, did make him deny his earthly Glory and Dignity, and did mightily bear up his soul in the midst of sufferings.

Yea further, let me tell you; this very Consideration was a great support even unto our Saviour Christ himself under all his afflictions, and a great comfort to him in all his sufferings; therefore we are exhorted to consider his example, and to make him our pattern in this very particular, *Heb. 12. 2, 3.* where the Apostle bids us, *Look unto Jesus the Author and finisher of our Faith; who for the JOY that was set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the Shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.* (Mark) The JOY that was set before him, and the Crown that was laid up for him, was that which did exceedingly bear up his Soul to endure the Cross, and carry him forth to despise the Shame; for he knew, that though he was attended with sorrows here on Earth, yet there was joy enough in Heaven to make him amends for all: And though he was now clothed with shame and reproach, yet he should shortly be clothed with Glory and Majesty in his Fathers Kingdom; and for his Cross he should receive a Heavenly Crown; Therefore he willingly bore the Cross, and patiently underwent the Reproach, knowing that this Glorious Reward would largely requite him for all his Troubles: Therefore says the Apostle; *Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds.* When we are surrounded with Sorrow, and compassed about with Troubles, let's remember our Heavenly Portion, where we shall have fulness of joy and pleasures for ever; and when we are attended with crosses and several calamities, then let's remember our Crown of Glory, reserved for us in our Fathers Kingdom: Let us in all things consider the example

of Jesus Christ, and be sure to follow his steps; and then we shall be sure to partake of the same encouragement, and be in a better capacity to run with patience the Race that is set before us.

Thus much for the third *Use*, by way of Encouragement.

But *Fourthly*, by way of Exhortation; this may serve to exhort us to three things:

First, Seeing it is so, That the Lord hath so much tender love and respect for his People, as to provide and prepare a Kingdom for them: Oh! then let us be exhorted to increase and abound in our love one towards another; Let us be sure to continue stedfast in Brotherly Love, and to abound in Christian charity one towards another, as becomes the Elect of God; for if the Lord himself have such Bowels of Love and Affection for them, as to honour them with a Crown and Kingdom; how much more should we have Bowels of Love and affection one towards another, for whom this Kingdom is provided? And if the Lord himself tender his People as the Apple of his Eye, and count them worthy of Eternal Glory: Oh! how may this engage us to be tender one towards another, and count one another worthy of respect and love? yea, it may engage us to manifest abundance of tender love, and cordial affection, even to the meanest and poorest of the Lords People; yea, though they be never so contemptible in the eyes of the World, and never so mean and low in their earthly stations, yet let us be tender towards them, and embrace them in love, and let us account them honourable, and esteem them lovely; for they are all Heirs of a Glorious Kingdom, and they are all the dearly Beloved of the Lord: Therefore this may engage us to love one another, and this may engage us to be exceeding careful of each others welfare: Therefore says the Apostle, *1 Joh. 4. 11. Beloved, if God so loved us, how ought we to love one another?* If the Lord himself hath so much love for us, as to make us heirs of life and glory; how should this enjoin us to endeavour to exceed in our love one towards another, and to abound in our affections towards all Saints? Oh! let us take heed of slighting and contemning one another, and let us take heed of scorning and setting at nought, even the very poorest and meanest of Gods Jewels: But let all those that truly fear the Lord, be dear and precious to us, though they are never so vile and ridiculous in the account of the World; for they are all lovely in the sight of God, and they are all precious in the eyes of the

the Lord; and we are all his Children by faith in Jesus Christ; therefore let us live in unity and love like Brethren; Let us get and maintain an affection suitable to our Spiritual Relation, and be sure to discharge a tender duty one towards another; for we are all Children of one Father, and we are all fed from one Fountain, and we all belong to one Family, and we are all Heirs to one Kingdom: Therefore let us take heed of dividing in our Love, and of difference in Affection; seeing we are all one in Spiritual Relation, and all concern'd in one Portion; and seeing we are all travelling towards one Country, and all journeying towards one Land: Oh! let us take heed that we do not quarrel and fall out by the way; but rather let us like honest Travellers, love and pity one another, and comfort and encourage one another, and bear one anothers burden, and help one another forward in our progress towards Heaven; that so we may manifest our selves to be the Children of God, and the Disciples of Christ, by our love and affection one towards another; and that we may make it appear to the world, that we are living Christians, by our love to Christians; and that we are Born of God, by our love to his Begotten: for sayes the Apostle, *1 Joh. 3. 14. We know that we have passed from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren; for he that loveth not his Brother abideth in Death.* (Mark) He that hath not love and affection towards his Christian Brethren, it is an evident sign that he is in a state of Death, and that he is very unfit to stand as a Member in the Church of Christ; for he is of no more use there, than a rotten Branch in a fruitful Tree, or a wooden legg in a mans Body, which stands only for an outward shew, but hath no life in it to refresh the Body; and if all the members of the Body should be afflicted with grief, yet still that would feel no pain, nor would not at all be sensible of the Bodies sufferings; and the reason is, because it's a dead member, and wants the life that maintains and feeds the Body: even so it is with a professed Christian that wants love to his Brethren; he can hear of the afflictions of his Brethren, and not at all be troubled; and he can understand that his Brethren are in great want and misery, and have no sympathy nor fellow-feeling with them in their condition: and the reason is, because he is a dead member, and wants that spiritual life that feeds and maintains the power of Godliness in the Soul; for if he be acquainted with the Spiritual Birth, and if his Soul be alive for God, he cannot be without love to his Brethren.

thren. Therefore says the Apostle in another place : *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God ; and every one that loveth his Brother is Born of God*, and is acquainted with the Lord. Therefore let this Doctrine of the Kingdom persuade us to continue and abound in this fruit of the Spirit ; and seeing we profess our selves to be all Partners in one Kingdom, let us be all Partners together in Love and Affection.

Thus much for the first word of Exhortation.

But again, *Secondly*.

2. If it be so, that the Lord hath provided and prepared a Kingdom for his People, and will one day Crown them with Eternal Glory : Oh ! then let us be exhorted to bless and praise the Lord for his goodness towards us , and to magnifie his Glorious Name for this his unspeakable Love. Oh ! the exceeding Riches of his Grace in this very particular, doth mightily engage us to celebrate his praise to the utmost of our power, both in word and action : Oh ! how are we bound to set forth his Glory, and to magnifie his Mercy, and to speak well of his Goodness, for this his tender respect to his People : yea, all his Attributes shines and shews themselves beautifully in the accomplishment of this our great and wonderful Privilege, and loudly calls for a thankful Return at our hands. Oh ! how are we engaged to the Lord for his Goodness ? and how are we bound to praise him for his rich Grace ? To consider, that we, even such poor Creatures as we, even when we were in a lost perishing state, & lay polluted in our Blood, in an undone Condition, that then the Lord should vouchsafe to cast his Eye upon us, and pity us, and manifest his Love and Goodness so far unto our Souls, as to find out a way for our Recovery, and to bring about our Redemption by the death of his own Son ; and to put us into a capacity of Salvation, that we might be honoured with the Dignity of Adoption, and enabled to call him Father, through faith in his only Begotten ; That so we might be partakers of a Heavenly , Glorious, and Unmoveable Kingdom. Oh ! what unspeakable Love, and excellent Kindness is this ? Oh ! what rich Grace, and infinite Mercy is here extended to our Souls ? How do we stand engaged to the Lord for his infinite Goodness ? Pray let's consider how it is in natural Cases : If in case, that we were poor and miserable, and wanted relief and comfort for our outward Man, and could not tell where, nor which way to find any succour : And now if a rich Man that hath

fulness about him, should take our Condition into consideration, and merely out of Love and Pity towards us, should hand forth Relief and Comfort to us, and plentifully supply all our Wants, and put us into a happy Condition, and after all this, make us Heirs of a Rich Inheritance. Oh! how should we be engaged to esteem such a Courtesie as this? And how should we be engaged to prize such a wonderful Kindness? Oh! how would this bind us to acknowledge his Love, and draw forth our hearts with thankfulness towards him? Or else, if we did not, almost every one would be ready to condemn us for our Ingratitude! And besides, we should even give our Friend just occasion to cast us out of his favour, and take our Inheritance from us. Well, but now the Lord hath done abundance more for us than all this; and he hath extended his Love towards us in a wonderful manner, even beyond comparison: yea, he hath done that for us, that all the men in the World, and all the Angels in Heaven, could never have done by their greatest power; and he hath provided and prepared such a Rich and Glorious Portion for us, as all the World is not comparable thereunto.

Oh! then consider; how are we bound to prize and esteem this infinite Kindness of God, and thankfully to acknowledge his unspeakable Love? And how are we bound to bless the Lord for his Goodness, and to shew forth the Praises of him who hath thus called us out of Darkness, into his marvellous Light? Therefore seeing the Lord hath been so much enlarged in his Love and Goodness towards us: Oh! let us endeavour to be enlarged in our thankfulness towards him, lest we give him occasion to withdraw his Love from us for our gross Ingratitude, and deprive us of our Portion, for our ill improvement of his great Love! Therefore you shall find that the Apostle himself makes this use of this very particular, *1 Pet. 1. 3, 4. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant Mercy hath Begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, to an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, which fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us.* (Mark.) The consideration of Gods Goodness manifested in our hope of Glory, and the consideration of our reserved Inheritance, is that which doth here occasion him to bless and praise the Lord, and exceedingly draws forth his spirit with thankfulness towards him, and causeth him to acknowledge and admire his abundant Mercy towards us; who hath Begotten us to a lively hope

hope of such a Heavenly Inheritance ; Therefore saith the Apostle *Paul*, Col. 1. 12, 13. *We do not cease to give thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light ; who hath delivered us from the power of Darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.* Oh ! therefore let the consideration of our Heavenly Portion dwell upon our hearts, and exceedingly draw forth our souls with thankfulness towards our Heavenly Father ; and let us mightily endeavour to set forth the Praise and Glory of him, who hath provided and prepared such an Excellent Kingdom for his People.

Thus much for the second word of Exhortation.

I shall now come to the Third and last word of Exhortation, and so conclude.

3. Seeing the Lord hath provided and prepared such a Glorious and Heavenly Kingdom for his People ; Oh ! then let all those that profess an Interest in this Kingdom, walk worthy of God, who hath called us to such a Glorious Inheritance : Let the consideration thereof mightily engage us to a Holy, and a Heavenly Conversation. Oh ! let us be sure to walk suitably and answerably to such an Honourable and Heavenly Profession ; as becomes those that are Heirs of a Kingdom, and as becomes those that have an Interest in such an unspeakable Portion : Oh ! let's consider what a Glorious Profession we bear, and what a Heavenly work we are called unto ; and let us be sure to walk so, as that we may honour our Profession with a suitable Conversation, and answer the end of our Heavenly Calling, by a cheerful continuing in the paths of Holiness. Oh ! let us take heed that our Actions do not witness against our Words, and our Conversations give our Profession the lye ; But as we bear a Heavenly Profession, so let us lead a Heavenly Conversation ; and let us not suffer our hearts and affections to run out after the things of this Life ; But if we be risen with Christ, let us seek those things which are above, and let our Affections there, where we profess our Portion is ; and let us manifest our selves to be Heirs of this Kingdom, by our constant continuing in the work of the Kingdom ; and let us not shame our selves, nor disgrace our Royal Profession with doing upon the beggerly things of this World ; but let us make it appear to the World, that we are the Sons of God, and Heirs of Heaven, by abounding in the fruits of the Spirit, and devoting our selves to Heavenly things ; and let us take heed that we do not defile our selves with any of the works of Darkness, nor stain our Heavenly Reputation with wandering in the filthy paths of Iniquity : For we that profess our selves to be Heirs of this Glorious Kingdom, we must not expect to walk as other Gentiles walk, *in the vanity of their minds, and in the lusts of the flesh* ; (for if we do, we must expect to be rewarded accordingly.) But we must if we expect a better Reward than others, exercise our selves in a better Work than others ; and we must put off our former Conversation, and cast away the old Man with his deeds, which is corrupt, and be renewed in the Spirit of our Minds, and put on the new Man, which after God is created, in Righteousness & true Holiness, that so we may adorn our Princely Profession, and walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are Called. For pray consider, what an unsuitable thing it would be for a Prince, or one that is Heir to an Earthly Kingdom, to go up and down in Beggers Apparel, and associate himself with the meanest and basest of the People, and expose himself to such a contemptible Course of life, as to spend his time in the works of drudgery and slavish employment, and take up his lodging (with Beggers) on a dunghill, or under a hedge ; and yet keep up his Princely Profession, and proclaim himself to be the Son of a King, and Heir to a Kingdom ; I say it

would be accounted a very unfavourable thing, and a great dishonour to one of his degree, and it would very much stain and diminish his Reputation in the eyes of the World, and render him very ridiculous amongst his Friends and Relations: How much more would it be an unfavourable thing for us that profess our selves to be the Children of GOD, and Princes of HEAVEN, and Heirs to an ETERNAL Kingdom, if we should suffer the rage of unrighteousness to rest upon us; and go along with the wicked in the paths of impurity, and exercise our selves in the Devils drudgery, and set our affections upon the unprofitable vanities of this Life, & take up our lodging here under the hedges of Earthly Vanity; Oh how unfavourable would it be to our Heavenly Profession! And how greatly would it derogate from God, and diminish the Reputation of Godliness? And how unworthy and unfit should we render our selves of such a Glorious Inheritance; and we should justify the way of Truth to be mightily abused, and manifest our selves to be no better than Hypocrites: Therefore now let us endeavour to regulate and order our Conversations aright, in the fear of the Lord, and to walk circumspectly, both in Words and Actions, redeeming the time, because the dayes are evil; and let no corrupt Communication proceed out of our mouths, nor no corrupt Actions be seen in our lives, but rather let the appearance of Gods Grace unto our Souls, reach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and righteously in this present evil World; that so we may walk worthy of the Land ours all pleasing, increasing and abounding in the fruits of the Spirit, and continuing and persevering in the way of the Lord, all the dayes of our lives, to the Praise and Glory of him, who hath called us to such a Heavenly, Glorious, unmovable Kingdom.

Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make us perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord; To whom with the Father, through the Spirit of Grace, be Blessing and Glory, Wisdom and Thanksgiving, Honour and Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now, heretoforth and for evermore, Amen.

THE END.

91/77

